POLYHEDRON®

140

VOLUME 20
NUMBER 01
MONTH 02/2K

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I'm writing this editorial on a computer that was supposed to stop working two days ago, when the infamous Y2K computer bug seemed set to topple the delicate order of our society and devolve all of us to cave men and women. As it happened, the lack of any major cultural collapse changed the "bug" from infamous to mostly impotent, and we're left with the realities of the ordinary world. In its first week, the year 2000 is looking a lot more like the year 1999 than like a computerless wasteland that, let's face it, would have made a heck of an RPG setting (anyone up for a modified Twilight 2000 campaign?).

Most of you, if you worried about the computer glitch at all, probably had such trivial concerns as how to keep fed, warm, and relatively free of bullet holes. We here at HQ had more noble, selfless concerns. What effect would the Y2K Bug have on the megalithic RPGA Points Database?

You might think it a trivial concern. After all, what difference does it make if you played *Housecleaning 2* in 1997 or in 2097? Would it really matter if, by some bizarre twist of buggified glitchery, FELLOWSHIP-LEVEL™ members became Paragons, and Paragons became, well, something a little less lofty?

Those of you who would just as soon we do away with the point system can stop scoffing, now. Lots of people enjoy competitive play, and keeping track of members' play histories is an important part of what we do here in the honeycombed halls of Network HQ. If the computerized system were to collapse, we'd need to find some way to keep it up by hand. The dusty lorebooks kept in our locked file cabinet tell of ancient days in the Network, when coordinators of old had to compute point totals by hand. We don't envy them that at all, so when the ball dropped at midnight on the 1st of January, we let out a collective sigh of relief, not for the survival of the world we know and love, but for the beloved RPGA Points Database.

But all is not perfectly automated in the world of RPGA HQ. In order to get the information from the scoring packet to the database, an actual human must look at the packet and input that data by hand. That means two things:

1) He has to read your handwriting.

2) He has to fix any mistakes that might have "accidentally" found their way onto the packet.

Often, this is easier said than done, I'm afraid. Before coming to work at HQ, I figured most people filled out packets like I did. I didn't treat them like works of art, but I did do my best to make sure that whoever had to input the packets could read my writing, and that my paperwork and math were at least complete enough that any mistakes I'd made would be easy to find. After seeing the piles and piles of scoring packets that accumulate here in the office, I can only say that, well, not everyone pays this much attention.

To put it simply, some of you are pretty sloppy on your packets. Any mistakes or illegible writing forces our packet guy to go through your scoring again, often taking twice or three times as long to find a single error as it takes to enter an entire error-free packet. While egregious scoring packet errors sometimes cause us to disqualify an entire packet, we hate to do that, since it hurts players at the table who did everything correctly.

The scoring packet itself is filled with tips on how you can help the process move smoothly. If you haven't read that information for a while, please do. Here are a couple suggestions that are probably the most overlooked. Following them will help to ensure error free packets:

1) There's a line in the upper left-hand corner of the scoring grid called "checked by." Use it, please. After your show is over, have a friend recheck the math and paperwork, and initial that he has done so. Another set of eyes on a packet is always a good thing.

2) Always, always, always make sure the RPGA numbers of all players and judges appear correctly on the scoring packet grid. You'd be shocked by how many people don't do this.

Following those simple suggestions would probably take care of 80% of the common scoring packet frustration that goes on around here. I ask you to follow them. Not for me, but in remembrance for our planet's survival of the Y2K computer bug, and for the perseverance of our beloved scoring system.

Yours in a rather peaceful-looking Armageddon,

ERIK

Erik's editorial

SCORING PACKETS AND THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

Publisher
TSR, Inc.

Worldwide RPGA Manager
David Wise

Editor
Erik Mona

Art Director
Mark Painter

Subscriptions
Game Support (800) 324-6496

Production
Donna Woodcock

Graphic Designer
Sean Glenn

WORDS FROM THE WISE

The new Big Cheese wants to know what you think! Each issue of POLYHEDRON, he'll use this space to ask you a question about how you interact with the network. It's all part of our plan to continue to improve how we do things around here. So drop Worldwide RPGA Manager David Wise a line, and let him know what you think!

Question 1: How did you first learn about the RPGA?

Please send your responses to wiseguy@wizards.com, or David Wise, c/o Wizards of the Coast, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Tell him Polyhedron sent ya. ■

RPGA INTRODUCES NEW POINTS PARADIGM!

Yeah, yeah, yeah, you say. But I'm not into competition! I play games to have a good time, not to win or lose!

That's fine with us, and starting in the year 2000, RPGA scoring packets will have a little box you can check to run sanctioned games in a "non-scoring" format. Non-scored games assign a median participation score for all events, and all players get the same number of points. For those of you non-competitive types who like to live on the edge and delve into competitive play from time to time, you needn't worry — your non-scored tables won't count against you when we determine annual rankings. ■

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The new century, and our new international integration, brings a change in the organization of the staff at HQ and around the world. This means that who you used to talk to about your Network-related questions may have changed. Therefore, I would like to tell you how the employees who serve you are organized, and clue you in on who is best suited to answer your questions.

At the top of the ladder sits the Worldwide RPGA Manager, David Wise. David has been a designer, editor, creative director, and brand manager for TSR businesses for a long time, and is very excited about taking over the RPGA. He is a global strategist, and he works with other Wizards of the Coast departments to promote and integrate the RPGA into company-wide business practices. His efforts result in more opportunities for members.

Below the Worldwide Manager, the RPGA is organized into two "arms." The first arm is Branch Management. Branch Managers run the RPGA in a branch, or geographical area the size of a country or larger. Within that area, the Branch Manager handles membership and concerns, supports conventions, works with the Regional Directors to provide local contact and information, and assists in executing the Living campaigns, clubs, Adventurer's Guild, and other programs. The Branch Manager works with HQ and the other Branch Managers to ensure uniform high quality of Network products and programs. Those of you who have been around for a while can equate the old title of Network Coordinator with Branch Manager. The Branches and Branch Managers are:

North America: Tom Ko
United Kingdom and South Africa: Ian Richards
Germany and Austria: AMIGO Spiel
Europe*: Ann Van Dam
Asia-Pacific: Wes Nicholson
**The Europe Branch does not include countries within Europe that have their own branches.*

The second arm of the RPGA structure is called Support Staff, and comprises those staff members who work on programs that are executed in all the branches. These programs include LIVING campaigns, POLYHEDRON Maga-zine and other publications, clubs, ADVENTURER'S GUILD Retail Play, online play, and more. These staff members help the Branch Managers provide the quality programs that you expect from your membership. The Support Staff is comprised of:

Local Activities Coordinator: Scott Magner *Retail play, clubs, online play, home play programs, playtesting*
Publications Coordinator: Erik Mona *Polyhedron, the annual adventure, other publications*
HQ Manager: Robert Wiese *LIVING campaigns, scenario sanctioning, information services, planned convention presence*

As you can see, LIVING campaigns are going to get more attention as some of my other duties are absorbed by other support staff members and our new North American Branch Manager.

While this is a lot of new information, we hope that this makes it easier for you to get the answers you need as quickly as possible.

Until next time,

Robert

notes from HQ

WHO DO I TALK TO ABOUT...?

TOP RPGA SCENARIOS OF 1999

As the new millennium begins, it is time to review what has gone before. Here are the top 10 RPGA scenarios that were released in 1999, as measured by highest average scenario score. This list does not take into account results which have not been reported (naturally), and it cannot account for scenarios that people liked but rated low, or did not like but rated highly because their GM was good. It does include all scenarios for which there were at least 25 players (4 tables) in 1999.

SCENARIO NAME	AUTHOR NAME	AVG. SCORE	# PLAYERS
1. Three Coins in a Well (LC HPL2)	Erich A Schmidt	99	93
2. His Majesty's Retainers (AD&D)	Pete and Kim Winz	94	44
3. Under a Pale Green Sky (AD&D)	Ruth Pinsky and Reynolds C Jones	94	992
4. Relentless Pursuit (Star Wars)	Robert Wiese	93	24
5. On Guard (LC HUD6)	Weston Peterson and Richard Brill	92.25	134
6. Monkey City (LJ)	Robert Wiese	92	65
7. Mission to China (LD)	Keith W Hoffman	91.5	108
8. Lacquered Chest (LC)	Lawrence J Ramirez	90.5	639
9. And Pearls Do Not Dissolve in the Mud (AD&D)	Brett and Cyndi Bakke	90	72
10. Mission for Arabel 2: Arabel's Twin (AD&D)	Ann Marie Paulukonis and Greg Dreher	89.2	106

Ratings on the scenario are used by HQ to determine if a scenario should be retired early, or if an author should receive some help before submitting again, and to make these neat Top 10 Lists. For rating the scenario, a 5 means "this was perfect." For the Challenge question, this means that the scenario was neither too easy nor too hard, but provided a good challenge for the players and characters involved.

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table talk

NOTES FROM THE ROAD

In the last year, I've been out of the office pretty steadily. I travel at least twice a month, whether to big conventions around the country, or to gamedays here in the Northwest. A lot of people ask me what I do when I'm out on the road. It's an easy question to answer, but it's also related to another question that is often put to me: "Why does the Network need all this money?"

Well, I'll tell you. I spend the majority of the time listening to you. While we are gaming, or out at lunch, I'm listening to your problems. Sure, it doesn't sound like much, but it is a very important part of what we do here at HQ. The Network is more than just the five of us here in the office. It's the 37,000-some people worldwide that decided that roleplaying games are important to them, and took the next step. Divided between the five of us, that's approximately 7,400 members apiece. Quite a chore, especially since most of those people don't know who to ask about their problems, or even where to start.

That's where the Network part of RPGA® Network comes in. In reality, the Network isn't chopped into five big pieces. It's parceled out into 37,000. Each of us has our own idea of what the RPGA is, and what it can do for us. To me, the Network has always been a way to meet other people with similar interests to mine.

I first joined in 1990, at a convention my gaming group told me I had to attend. Okay, I said, this could be fun. So I joined, and played my first event that weekend. What made it really special for me was that the judge for that first round was the guy who had taken my money, then California Regional Director Gary Haynes. Gary had driven over to Phoenix, Arizona to help get some gaming started. After the game, he noticed that I was a bit troubled by the round, and talked to me about it. It made an impression on me – one that I carry to this day. It wasn't all that important, it wasn't earth-shattering in its implication, but it meant something to me that someone as important as Gary wanted to make sure that I had a good time.

A lot of years have passed since then, with a lot of games in between. A few years after that first game, I left college, and returned to the Pacific Northwest to spend time with family. For a while, I remained in contact with Gary, who helped me try to get gaming organized in the area. He was very helpful, and again I was impressed by the attention he was willing to give to someone he barely knew, so that we could bring the Network to more and more people. While real life invaded, and I eventually stopped promoting the Network, the desire to help people, like Gary had helped me, remained.

Now, real life and my favorite hobby have converged, and it's my job to promote the Network. When I'm out and about, I try to show that same consideration that was once shown to me. Every member is important, and it's the job of all of us to make sure that that new person, the first-time RPGA player, has a good time. It may seem like the Network is some monolithic, faceless entity that keeps asking you for $20, but it's really made up of people, people just like you.

I mentioned the help that an RD gave me in the previous paragraphs. Those sorts of people are still out there for you. They are your Regional Directors, and they are just as willing as I am to help you out when you have a problem. And that group of friends I mentioned? We formed an RPGA Club that weekend, to make sure that we could continue to have good games with good people. Odds are, if you aren't already a member of it, there is a club near you that shares the same philosophy. I can help you hook up with them, as can your RD.

As I write this, I have recently returned from a convention in Kansas City. ShaunCon was a blast for me, a real fun weekend. Staring Thursday night, and all the way through Sunday, I spent time listening to the members who had come. I played a lot of good games, with a lot of good people. I judged a great table of players, who were some of the best I've played with in a long time. And on Sunday, when we were packing up to leave, I signed someone up for the RPGA Network.

Now that was worth the money. Every penny.

Scott J. Magner
Local Activities Coordinator
Member # 143017

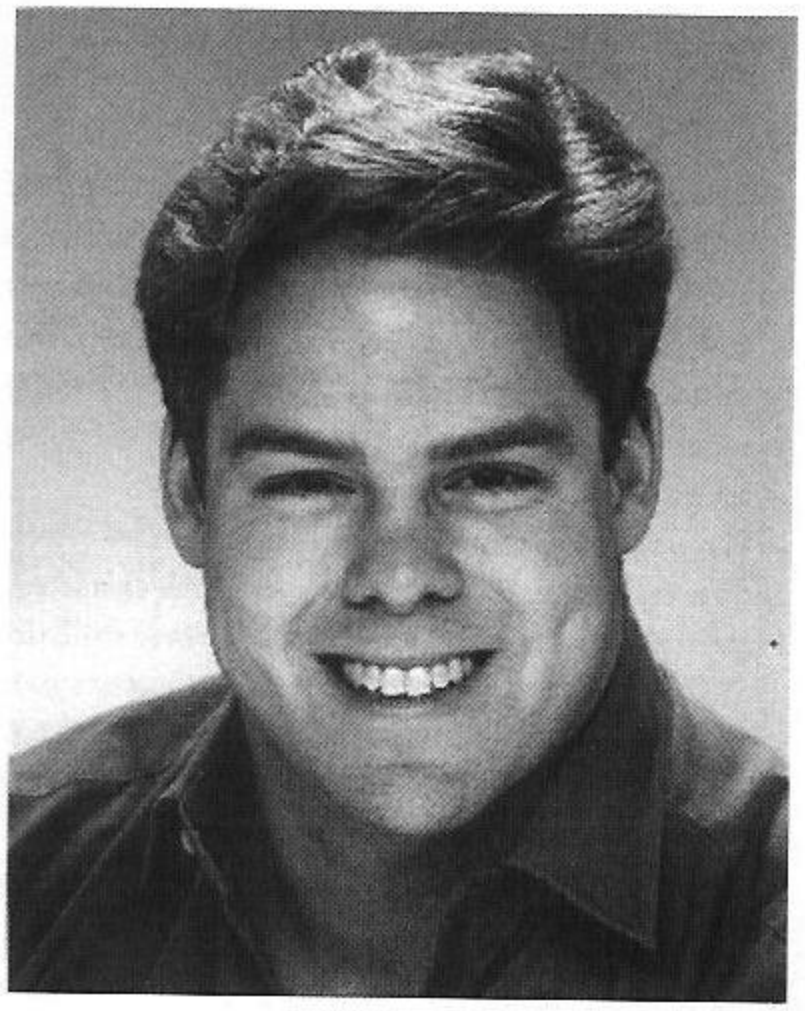
LIVING DEATH NEWS!

The RPGA's LIVING DEATH™ Campaign will be converting to Third Edition Dungeons & Dragons®. All 1894 (2001) modules will use Third Edition D&D rules as their core rule system. The 3rd Edition D&D rules will be tailored to retain the flavor and style found in *Masque of the Red Death* and RAVENLOFT® campaign settings. The converted Third Edition LD rules, as well as guidelines for converting your heroes, will become available at GEN CON® 2000.

As part of the preparation for the conversion process, there will be an adjustment to the level spread in 1893 (2000) modules. For all modules set in 1893, the definition of low-level will be levels 1 through 4, mid- will be 5 through 8, and high-level will be level 9 and up.

Those modules (1893) which premier before June 1, 2000 will retire 12/15/00. Modules that premier between June 1, 2000 and December 31st, 2000 will have a conversion appendix added by Jan. 1, 2001 and will retire 12/15/01.

Dual classed heroes should count their levels as follows: divide level of first class by 2 (round down) and add to current class.



Out of this was born the Rocky Mountain Benefit Gamers Association, the RMBGA, and our major fund raiser BenCon ("Benefit Convention"). I served as president and convention organizer the first three years, and now Tim White has taken the position and is leading the organization to even bigger and better goals. I currently sit on the association's board of directors and serve as secretary.

BenCon has consistently raised more than $10,000 each year for the last five years. The RMBGA has donated that money to various organizations helping the handicapped, destitute, ill, and animals.

What makes a gaming experience memorable for you?

When I recall my favorite gaming experiences, they all share three characteristics; the people, their characters, and the level of roleplaying.

Many years ago I ran a Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play campaign. I ran the *Power Behind the Throne* adventure for my group, which occurs during a nine-day festival. It took us nine gaming sessions to complete the adventure, and for two sessions, no one even picked up their dice.

member spotlight

BY STEPHAN H. JAY

KEN RITCHART — PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

How long have you been gaming?

I was first introduced to roleplaying in 1977, when I was forced to take an art class in seventh grade. One day, I noticed this interesting box on my art teacher's desk. I was already fascinated by fantasy adventure, and the box had this huge dragon and warriors approaching it. We talked, and she explained that it was a new game she had just picked up called DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. I went home and begged my parents to take me to the hobby store so I could buy this new game.

I devoured the Basic Set rulebook that night.

How did you get started in the RPGA®?

I joined the RPGA the first year it started. I was member #407. I saw the ad in DRAGON® Magazine and decided that I should be part of a larger gaming community. In addition, they were going to have tournaments at the GEN CON® Game Fair, and I wanted to compete with the best gamers. I still have my letter of acceptance from TSR.

How have you brought together your love of gaming and your passion for volunteerism?

I'm the RPGA Regional Director of the Mountain States. In addition, I have helped organize conventions and roleplaying for more than ten years, ran a local RPGA club for several years, and served as a Regional Director back when it was a strictly volunteer job.

I first became aware of the charity aspect of gaming at a GEN CON many years ago. Many gamers, I discovered, did not allocate a part of their funds for charity simply because they either were not aware of what needs were out there, or did not feel that their donations would make a difference. I envisioned an organization that would raise money for charity, primarily through game events and conventions. I shared my vision with my friends, and they boosted my enthusiasm and energy.

Another favorite memory, and proof that the RPGA really does bring people together, concerns the club team event many years ago. Only three of us could make it from Colorado, so we drafted Jae Walker and Wes Nicholson to join our club and team. We roleplayed, laughed, and caused things to come out of our DM's nose for four hours. Not only did we have a great time, but we advanced to rounds 2 and 3, and took second place overall. Everyone still talks about those sessions, the characters we played, and the judges we caused to lose it in fits of laughter.

What do you do in the real world?

In the real world, I work as a manager for a software development team at Boston Chicken, Inc. I am still single, with two phenomenal Shetland Sheepdogs, Tristan and Piper, who share my house. I keep busy volunteering for the RMBGA, and helping other charity organizations throughout the year.

In my spare time, I work for Wizards of the Coast as an RPGA Regional Director, operate a software and convention consulting business, and operate a home business teaching people the fun of scrapbooking. My other hobbies include model railroading, reading, movies, needlecrafts of all sorts, computer games, billiards, writing, and most important of all, my friends.

In the next couple of years, I hope to continue as Regional Director for Wizards of the Coast, get my teaching certification for quilt making, increase my home business, and travel more. So, while gaming is an important part of my life, it is still only one piece in the entire puzzle that is Ken.

If you're interested in the charitable aspect of gaming, you can contact Ken by e-mail at: KenRPGARD@aol.com.■

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lc judge guidelines

JUDGING TIPS FOR THE LIVING CITY

Being a game master in RPGA® events involves making many decisions about character actions, running encounters, portraying NPCs, and adjudicating the effects of traps, spells, and (literally) everything else in the world. LIVING CITY™ events are particularly difficult for the game master, for several reasons.

First, you don't know what characters will come to the table, or what they can do, so your preparation is more involved than with other types of tournaments. Second, LIVING CITY players care deeply about the welfare and future of their characters, much more than they would if characters were provided. Every ruling that could kill a character is hotly protested, and every situation is evaluated in terms of fairness towards characters.

However, judging a LIVING CITY event can be rewarding, as well. You have the opportunity to think on your feet and respond to unusual situations ("I use my *wand of wonder* on the wall behind the monsters, then I pull out this gem that gives me +5 to my rope use proficiency, which I use to catch the bad guy"). To help you through this experience, we provide these guidelines. Whether you are a veteran Living City game master or a beginner, they should help simplify your life and explain what you need to know to run an excellent game.

THE ROLE OF GAME MASTER

A game master's job is to moderate events and make decisions based on fairness and adherence to game rules, and most importantly, to make sure the players have a great time without sacrificing fairness. A tournament game master runs one part of the campaign. Players expect to be treated fairly, to have the core AD&D® rules applied in all situations, and to have every chance to survive. It is your responsibility to ensure that. When you make decisions and run encounters, consider the players' and characters' points of view in addition to your own. If a situation develops in which the characters will be killed, it should be as much their own doing as the deadliness of the encounter.

The Network has a set of ethics guidelines (called Standards of Content) which it follows in considering whether to sanction tournaments, and you must abide by those guidelines when judging events. A complete set of ethics guidelines is available from Network HQ, but they can be summed up as: treat players with respect, refrain from belittling current establishments in our culture, and make sure that everyone knows it's just a game.

PREPARATION

Read the scenario thoroughly prior to the event. You owe it to the players to be as prepared as possible, to give them the best experience possible. In addition, lack of knowledge of the adventure can result in not running it correctly. Try to meet with one or two other game masters to discuss anything you don't completely understand. This promotes greater consistency between tables of the same event at the same convention. Players will talk about the event with each other later.

Players bring their own characters to LIVING CITY events, and are responsible for keeping records of the character's experience, wealth, and possessions. Look over the characters that are brought to your table, both to familiarize yourself with them and to check for unusual magic items or discrepancies. Magic items are represented by certificates, and if the player does not have a valid certificate for the item, his or her character does not have the item.

PURCHASING EQUIPMENT

PCs can purchase weapons, armor, supplies and other materials at the prices listed in the Players' Handbook and Arms & Equipment Guide as described in the character creation rules. These purchases can be made outside of tournament time. If players present you with a log entry to sign for normal equipment purchases, verify the information and sign it.

Magic items are acquired only during the course of tournament play and at special convention activities. Trading magic items among PCs is allowed. Players may ask you to witness a trade, to ensure fairness. If you have time, please do. If you find any suspicious-looking certificates, inform the player that you think the certificate is suspicious and disallow its use in the adventure until it is approved by a LIVING CITY campaign board member, HQ employee, or Regional Director.

PRECAST SPELLS

Druids and clerics can begin play with 1d4 *goodberries*. The player should roll to determine how many berries his character has.

Wizards, clerics, bards, and druids can cast certain enchantments prior to the start of each adventure. These spellcasters can select one appropriate spell from the following list to be in play when the tournament begins. This does not count against their starting spell allotment.

Additional spells must be cast after the start of the adventure and are subtracted from the spellcaster's total number of available castings for the day. DMs must adjudicate casting of spells.

ENCHANTMENTS

1st: *Armor, wizard mark* — PHB; *weighty chest* — TOM
2nd: *Magic mouth, fire trap* — PHB
3rd: *Sepia snake sigil, continual light* — PHB; *accelerate healing* — TOM

All high-level campaign events contain an expanded list of available pre-cast spells, and that list should only be used in high-level campaign adventures.

PURCHASING PRIEST SPELLS DURING AN ADVENTURE

PCs may use gold pieces (from their log sheet) or magic items to buy spells from temples. Temple priests will never leave the temple to help adventurers unless otherwise stated in the module, so the PCs must go to the temple in question to get the spells.

Spells from the Healing and Necromantic Spheres are available on the same day as a request. Spells in All, Protection, Astral, Divination, Creation, Travelers, and Time Spheres are not available until the next day. Time Sphere spells are only available at the temple of Mystra. Spells in other spheres are not available.

Religion-specific spells (as found in *Faiths & Avatars*, *Powers & Pantheons*, and *Demihuman Deities*) will ONLY be cast on (or for) worshippers of that religion (i.e., priests, paladins, or enrolled worshippers who have a certificate indicating their status), unless an adventure specifically states otherwise.

A priest of the minimum level necessary casts each spell unless the PC pays a 10% per-priest-level premium (up to 14th level) on top of the base cost (so if you want cure disease cast by a 12th level priest, you pay the base cost plus 120% of the base cost). Mystran-cast spells with increased effectiveness have their cost doubled.

COSTS

Group 1: Standard price for any PC
Group 2: Price for enrolled priest of that temple
Group 3: Price for non-enrolled priests and paladins

Standard Spells	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1st, 2nd level	500 GP	125 GP	250 GP
3rd, 4th level	1000 GP	250 GP	500 GP
5th level	2000 GP	500 GP	1000 GP
6th level	8000 GP	2000 GP	4000 GP
7th level	32,000 GP	8000 GP	16,000 GP

Standard Spells	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Raise dead (5th)	50,000 GP	35,000 GP	45,000 GP
Regeneration (7th)	60,000 GP	42,000 GP	54,000 GP
Reincarnation (7th)	60,000 GP	42,000 GP	54,000 GP
Restoration (7th)	125,000 GP	87,500 GP	112,500 GP
Resurrection (7th)	150,000 GP	105,000 GP	135,000 GP

PCs enrolled at their temple (with an official LC Temples Certificate) get spells at enrollee price. If non-enrolled priests and paladins go to their faith's temple, they can get spells at non-enrolled priest/paladin price if they make a Fame Check in Temples. Otherwise, they pay standard price.

Obscure faiths may not have a temple in Ravens Bluff. Within the Civic Religion, the other temples will honor the "enrollment" price for the special spells if a PC's temple's priest are not high enough level to cast the spell. Other temples in Ravens Bluff generally do not have high priests of 14th level (with the exception of the non-human pantheons). If a PC of that faith needs a 7th level spell, the game master may offer the Non-enrolled priest/paladin price at a Civic Religion temple if they make a Fame Check in Temples.

Temples may refuse service if a PC acts offensively to their faith.

PURCHASING WIZARD SPELLS DURING AN ADVENTURE

The following spells are available for purchase from the Wizards Guild during normal adventuring. The game master may rule that no one is available at the guild to honor a given request, if a spell is deemed to somehow ruin the adventure.

These spells will be cast by a caster of the minimum level required unless the PC pays a premium of 10% per-caster-level above the base price. Generally, casters up to 16th level are available at the Guild. If the PC makes a successful Fame Check in either General or City Government, a caster of up to 24th level is available.

Dispel magic (3rd): 5,000 gp
Remove curse (3rd): 5,000 gp
Reincarnation (6th): 50,000 gp
Stone to flesh (6th): 50,000 gp

Wizards Guild members (with an official LC Wizards Guild certificate) may purchase these spells at 80% of the published rate. Be sure to check the player's membership certificate, as some guild members may not be "in good standing."

Other spells may be requested of the Wizards Guild using

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the special request process documented on the LIVING CITY website, or at Wizards Guild booths at major conventions. This is a non-adventuring activity, which adventurers may be able to use to reverse an unfortunate occurrence.

DURING PLAY

TIERED ADVENTURES

LIVING CITY adventures are designed for player characters (PCs) of any level. We accomplish this by a level-based tiering system in which the various foes and obstacles are different for different groups of PCs. At the beginning of the adventure you'll find instructions for how to determine the tier that the PCs at your table fall into.

The foes in a tiered grouping are designed to challenge characters whose average level is the center of the range. If the characters at your table are having too easy or too difficult a time, you can mix and match foes from the different groups above and below the one the characters fall into. The goal is to provide a challenge without overkill.

KITS AND SPECIALTY PRIESTHOODS

Players whose characters have kits or specialty priesthoods must bring the handbook which describes the kit or priesthood. You are not obliged to honor kits or specialty priest powers if the player cannot produce the proper book. If kits are involved, use the special hindrances to offset the special benefits and maintain play balance.

FAMILIARS AND FOLLOWERS

Some characters may have followers or henchmen. However, these followers never adventure unless the follower/henchman certificate specifically allows the follower/henchman to adventure. It is assumed that followers stay behind to watch the homestead.

If a wizard has an unusual familiar, you may disallow its use if the player cannot present a certificate for it.

RECOGNITION AND FAME

The Fame Rating system gives the chance on 1d20 that a particular PC is known to an NPC of a given grouping. Fame is given at the end of adventures in categories, and can range from 1 to 19 in a given category. To make a Fame Check, roll 1d20 like a proficiency check; if the result is lower than or equal to the character's Fame rating in the appropriate category, the check succeeds. A character may always check against the General category rather than a specifically applicable category. Remember that recognition is not always a good thing.

PCs who have bad reputations may acquire Infamy Points. When you look over the character sheets at the start of the adventure, note Infamy and find out the details. Then use the character's Infamy at your discretion during the adventure. Don't make Infamy checks, and Infamy is not given in categories. Bad news travels fast.

In interactions with NPCs, role-playing is the most important consideration. If a character is acting like a pain in the neck, he should be treated like one. Reaction adjustments for Charisma apply at the beginning of the encounter only, to determine first impressions. Certain extenuating circumstances may modify the reaction roll, such as Fame or close involvement with the NPC (city watchman dealing with the City Watch, Wizard Guild member dealing with the Ministry of Art).

NPCs who are not written into a module should not provide material assistance during and adventure. They can be used to get the PCs on track, or to provide additional role-playing if the PCs seek them out.

ALIGNMENT INFRACTIONS

Alignment infractions are a touchy subject. Ultimately, you are the final authority, but you must warn the player if his character is deviating from his chosen alignment. This warning must be clear, and make sure that the player understands. The PC can then correct the behavior, justify it, or face the consequences. If infractions continue, an alignment change may be in order. If a character changes alignment through play, and it is "voluntary" (i.e. not a magical effect), then the character loses experience to place him at the beginning of the next lowest level. Multi-class characters drop to the beginning of the next lowest level in both classes. Characters who become evil are retired from play.

These measures are a last resort; there is more than one way to play a given alignment.

DYING AND WILLS

Dead characters (ones who stay that way) may bequeath ONE magical item to ONE PC through a Will (or speak with

This is to verify that the Living City™ character

_____

Obtained the following item in the event *Magic Polyhedron – premiere item*

Head of Vecna

This major artifact grants several impressive powers to anyone who replaces their own head with the *head of Vecna*. This process tends to turn the owner into an undead, which could be a downside. If you replace your head with the *head of Vecna*, send this cert in to Certs By Mail, along with your character sheet, and we'll send you the powers.

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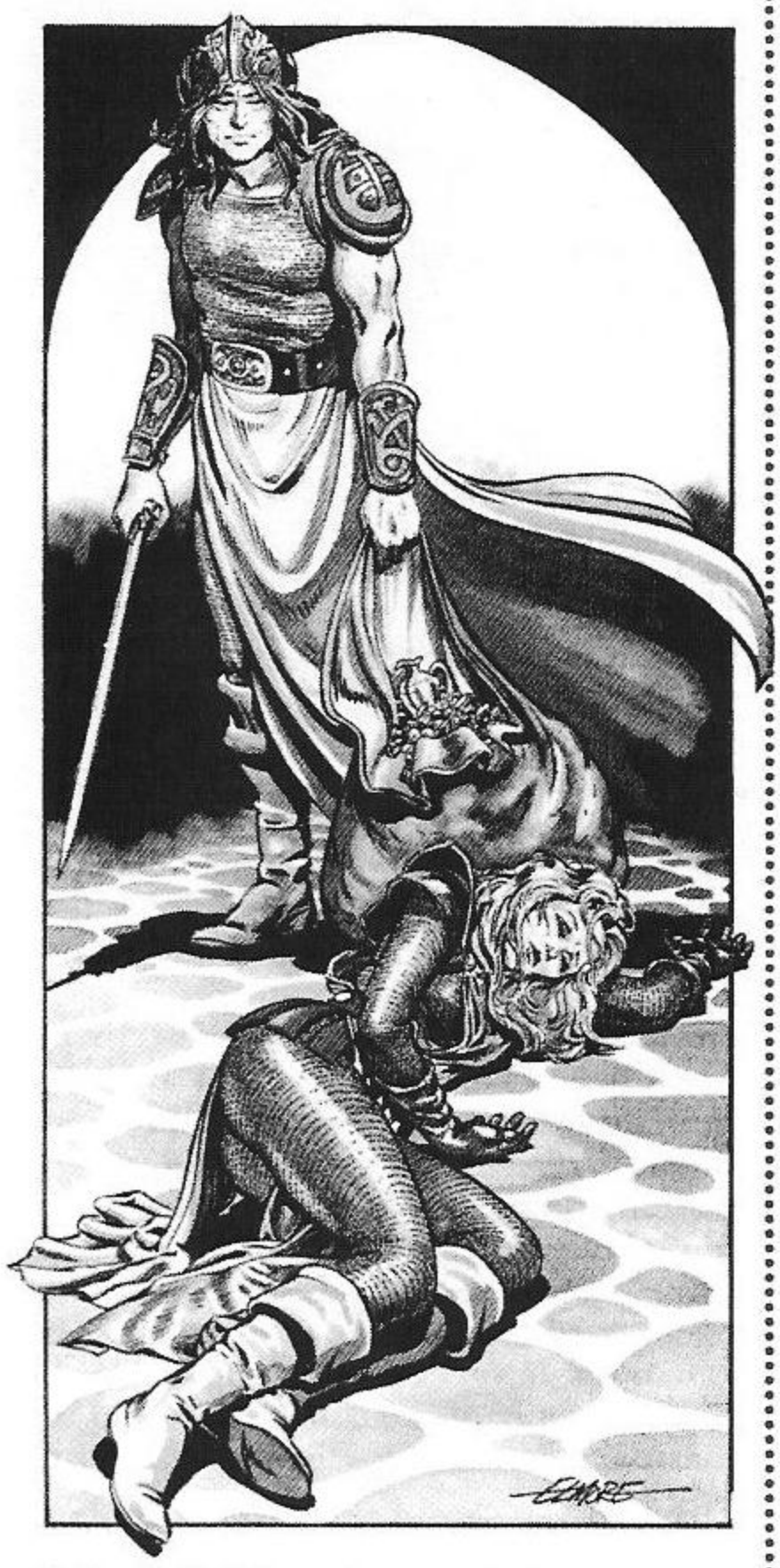
Authorized Signature Robert A Wise DM RPGA# 147045
Convention Winter Fantasy Date 1-14-00

LIVING CITY MAGIC CERTS LOOK LIKE THIS — COLLECT 'EM ALL!



dead spell). The Will must be prepared before the character died. The receiving character cannot be one of the same player's other characters. Magical items that are not disposed of via a Will are removed from play, and may not be retained by players. Void (do not destroy) all magic item certificates for that character. Looting dead PCs is considered an evil act, but gathering items necessary to pay for a *raise dead* spell for the dead PC is acceptable.

The magical items of dead characters may not be put into a charity auction, raffle, or other event, through a Will or any other means. The items of dead characters leave the game.

RECOVERY OF DEAD PCS

When PCs die, players like to have the bodies recovered so the PCs can be raised from the dead. This is possible if not all the PCs died, and one or more of them recovers the bodies.

If all of the PCs die (this is called a Total Party Kill, or TPK), then recovery of the bodies becomes more difficult, and depends on the circumstances under which everyone died.

If the deaths occurred in the city or civilized lands, you can assume that someone came by and brought the bodies to the nearest (or most appropriate) temple.

If the PCs all died on another plane or in hostile conditions (say, in the depths of the Abyss) you can safely assume that the bodies and items were not recovered. You can also assume that the bodies were not recovered if the foes would eat them, or would take steps to make sure no bodies were ever found (as in the case of some evil temples). You should be very clear with the players as to why the bodies could not be recovered, since they will want to argue with you or do something about it.

In cases where the chance of recovery is ambiguous, then you have to use your judgment. Unless the foes would destroy the bodies as a matter of course, you can assume that they were left in the wilderness or wherever, and tell the players that the bodies were eventually found and brought to a temple, or that they were not found but certainly could be if anyone went looking for them. Be kind to the players in these ambiguous instances; the goal is to have fun, and losing your PC because his body fell in a cleft and no one found it is not that fun.

In the case of TPKs, you can assume that if the foes are the type of people who would use magical items, then they would steal from the PCs any items they could use (so a group of thug fighters would take magical weapons and armor, but not scrolls or wands, and they might miss magical rings). This takes judgment, too. If the foes are not the kind that would bother with or know the value of magical items (low-ranking fiends, stupid humanoids, giants who cannot use human-sized stuff, etc) then you can assume that the dead PCs' items were not stolen if the bodies are recovered.

USING AND DESTROYING MAGICAL ITEMS

When magical items are used up during an adventure, you should ask the player whether you should tear the certificate or mark it void, then do whichever the player prefers.

When items are destroyed by magical effects, ALWAYS mark the certificates void. Do not tear them up; let the player do that if he or she chooses.

In the case of a TPK where the bodies are not immediately recovered, you should collect the certs from all the characters and turn them into your Regional Director or to a Living City staff person. If neither of these are available, turn them in to the convention coordinator. That way, if the PC is later recovered and brought back to life, the item certificates are still in existence. By destroying certs when the final fate of the item is unknown, you just make players upset for no reason.

If items are stolen from PCs and not recovered by the end of the adventure time, you should mark them "void-stolen" and include the date.

If it seems that there will be a dispute about your handling of the scenario when PCs died, then do not destroy anything. You will just cause problems down the line. Turn everything in to an appropriate official (as described above) and explain what happened. You may be asked for a written statement, which you can provide later.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

During the course of the adventure, the PCs will earn experience points based upon their accomplishments.

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Some of these points are for overcoming obstacles, finding information, defeating monsters, and recovering treasure. This is summarized at the end of the adventure. All characters that contributed to the success of an encounter **and survived the adventure** (or were *raised* immediately after) receive the listed experience points. For example, if an encounter lists an experience point value of 100 each — each PC participating earns 100 points. All experience points are awarded at the end of the tournament only.

Please note that experience points are tiered to the level of the group, as are the combats. Read the instructions included in the adventure for awarding experience points carefully. Experience points are summarized at the end of the tournament.

A character cannot go up more than one level per tournament round, but does not lose excess experience points as in a normal campaign. These points are part of the total; the character will advance to the next level at the end of the next event.

TREASURE

During their adventures, LIVING CITY characters accumulate treasure. It is up to the players how this is to be divided. The players should record what their individual characters acquire. The Treasure Summary contains a list of specific items and guidelines for other items that the PCs can keep. Follow these guidelines without deviation. The PCs must be informed of the nature and powers of all magical items. They are assumed to have them *identified* on their own time.

DON'T ACTUALLY DO THIS.

CALCULATING MAGICAL ITEM VALUES

Potions of longevity may be sold to the temples for 5000 GP at any time. For other magic items, use the gold piece value on the certificate. If there is no gold piece value, use the following guidelines to determine the value of any item for spell purchase purposes:

Armor and weapons have a base value of 2,500 gp per plus. If the item has additional powers, add 5,000 per additional power.

Rings and *cloaks of protection* are worth 5,000 gp per plus. If they have additional powers, add 5,000 go per power.

Rings and miscellaneous magical items are worth 5,000

AD&D RULES TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO

The following rules should be reviewed and used during Living City adventures:

Morale and Morale Checks: each foe is given a morale rating, which indicates when the foe runs away. This is important and balancing information, as some opponents might be very tough but easy to scare off. Please do not disregard Morale Checks. To make a Morale Check, roll 2d10. If the result is greater than the foe's ML (at the end of the stat block), the creature tries to flee, or surrenders, whichever is appropriate. DMG p. 98.

Reaction Checks: At the start of an encounter with NPCs, you should make a reaction check using the PC doing the talking as the primary person. This sets the tone for the roleplaying to follow. Bad reactions can be overcome through good roleplaying, but since you do not see a Charisma of 6 when looking at the player whose character has a Charisma of 6, you need to simulate the negative reaction using Reaction Checks. DMG p. 140.

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AD&D® 2ND EDITION OPTIONAL RULES USED IN LIVING CITY EVENTS

PLAYER'S HANDBOOK:

Nonweapon Proficiencies (p. 73)
Basic Encumbrance (p. 102)
Expensive Spell Components (p. 113)
Parrying (p. 133)
Group and/or Individual Initiative (p. 124-126)
Initiative modifiers from Table 56 (p. 125)
Weapon speed (p. 127)

DUNGEON MASTER® GUIDE:

Polearms and Weapon Frontage (p. 82)
Shields and Weapon Frontage (p. 82)
Hovering at Death's Door (p. 104)
Aerial Combat Tournament Rules (p. 106-108)
"Heat" Infravision (p. 160). This means perception of differences in heat emission, so one can see living bodies and campfires, but not undead, terrain features, or tracks left by living creatures. Drow, deep gnomes, and duergar have a special version of infravision that allows them actually to see in the dark as humans see during the daytime, up to their stated range of infravision.
Terrain Effects on Movement (p. 167, Table 73)

Do not use other optional or home rules unless they are allowed by the character creation guidelines or these guidelines. Sourcebook rules apply only to the material from that sourcebook.

gp for a single minor power (such as infravision or blinking). Add an additional 2,500 gp per additional power.

Rings and miscellaneous magical items with major powers (ring of free action, bag of tricks, bag of holding, ring of elemental command, etc) are worth 10,000 gp for the first power, and 5,000 gp per additional power.

Things which seem to be minor artifacts are worth 50,000 gp.

Rods, wands and staves are worth 12,500 gp if half the charges remain, and only 5,000 gp if fewer than half the charges remain. If there are no charges remaining, the item has no value.

Scrolls are worth 500 gp per spell level still inscribed on the scroll.

Potions are worth 2,500 gp per full dose remaining.

SOME EXAMPLES:

Cloak of displacement: 20,000 gp (10,000 gp for +2 protection plus 10,000 gp for the major power of 1st swing miss)

Pax with a single gem embedded: 27,500 gp (10,000 gp ornamental value, plus 7,500 go for +3, plus 5,000 for the light power of the sword, plus 5,000 for the gem power—this does not include the base value of the gem)

Ring of mind shielding: 5,000 gp

Ring of fire resistance (or *totem fire doll)*: 7,500 gp (5,000 for +4 fire protection, 2,500 for additional damage reduction power)

Items uniquely of interest to a particular faith in the GM's opinion may be valued as much as 30% higher. These items are generally tied to the faith somehow on the certificate.

These formulas will not always give the same values as found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but LIVING CITY does not have a normal economy. Use your judgment, and err on the side of conservatism, but if an additional amount less than 5,000 gp would get the spell desired (especially for spells that bring one back from the dead), be generous; don't refuse to let someone buy a *raise dead* spell when they are 1,000 gp short if there was any room in your estimations of item values.

ANOTHER SATISFIED CUSTOMER!

DISPUTES

The LIVING CITY program functions on the "Honor System." That is to say, player honesty regarding dice rolls, stats, magical items, and money will be maintained at all times. If, as a game master, you feel that a player is cheating, you may investigate the matter and warn the player. If cheating persists, take action to remedy the situation as you see fit, short of killing the character. While best dealt with at the gaming table, these remedies may include speaking to the convention director, LIVING CITY Campaign Staff, your Regional Director, or Network HQ. If play is disrupted by this player, then politely ask him or her to leave. If necessary, ask the convention staff for assistance.

When disputes over rules occur, handle them as quickly as you can while remaining fair to the players. Listen to the argument, make a decision based on game rules and these guidelines, and move on.

Should a dispute arise over decisions made at the gaming table, there is a review process available for the player to seek redress. Players must submit their grievance in writing to the LIVING CITY Communications and Information Board Member (email: LCInfo@rpga.net), who shall investigate any claims. Reviews of play conflicts generally support the game master unless there is clear reason not to.

The decisions of game masters in running games can only be overturned by a the LIVING CITY board acting in concert, by the LIVING CITY Communications and Information Board Member, or by an employee of the RPGA Network. Regional Directors have the authority to review and investigate disputes, but not to overturn game master decisions. Convention coordinators do not have the authority to do more than refer the matter to a Living City campaign staff person, Regional Director, or HQ employee. ■

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If you ask an Ondeeman, their realm glitters in the Border Kingdom like a dropped gem sparkling in the mud of a pig-wallow; to other Borderers, happy in the wallow, Ondeeme seems more like a drunken reveler whose gaudy costume was ridiculous to begin with, and in disarray now seems both tawdry and tasteless, worn by someone too foolish to know how they appear to those around them.

Shuldribrand Mroster
Mage Royal of Zindalankh
In conversation with Volo
Year of the Arch

Our ongoing look at the bucolic and sometimes surprising glories of the Border Kingdoms brings us this month to the coastal realm of Ondeeme, the "Echo of Calimshan."

ONDEEME

Once a land of small homesteads carved laboriously out of a lush forest, Ondeeme was transformed forever when the mage whose name it bears founded his own kingdom here.

Known originally as Phaeradur, after an archmage who dwelt alone and died there so long ago that all traces of his humble keep have vanished, Ondeeme was then a land of hard-working farmers (root crops seemed to grow best) protected from wolves, bears, and the occasional leucrotta or owlbear by their own "vestpocket baron," the self-styled Lord Athalric Klavaerron.

Athalric, a hard-drinking braggart who rarely divested himself of his magnificent, glossy, many-barbed suit of armor, spent much of his time drinking and most of the rest of it wenching, and told tales of his days as an armsman in the lowest ranks of Tethyrian service that would make a listener believe that the survival of that land — and most other Sword Coast cities, too — depended on the keen wits and strong swordarm of a lone man . . . who just happened to be known to the gods as Athalric Klavaerron.

His subjects, however, liked and understood Lord Athalric well enough. He neglected to tax them, arrived with his warband whenever they cried for aid against forest predators, and only issued laws and decrees face-to-face, when called to slay oppressive beasts. Athalric lived well in his overlarge, grandiose keep, feasting the days away on the fees paid to him by certain Tethyrian interests for silently hiding stolen goods, out-of-favor folk, and kidnapped hostages-for-coin in his castle. He was discreet, had few vices beyond the parade of lovely lasses his Tethyrian associates brought him, and sponsored his consorts, as he tired of them, in working as hostesses of the Sword of the Lord inn, which was known to travelers as a pleasant, even luxurious stopover in the midst of poor farms in the wild wood.

One of those wayfarers through Phaeradur was a successful wool-merchant of Schamedar who evidently liked what he saw. Ondeeme was a restless man, with a natural aptitude for magic and a love of dabbling in new schemes and young, opening markets. He hated to abide under the wills and laws of others, and saw the "uninhabited" Border Kingdoms as his chance to found his fortune and live as he pleased.

THE FOUNDING OF ONDEEME

Descending without warning on the Sword of the Lord one cloudy early spring afternoon in the Year of the Turret (1360 DR), Ondeeme blasted away viciously with slaying spells until the sprawling inn was a smoking ruin. When Athalric and his men boiled out of the castle in armed fury, he blasted them to ashes, too, and then calmly scoured the castle of all life and settled down for a good night's sleep in Athalric's bed with the still-smoldering bodies of the consorts and servants he'd slain strewn all around.

For the next three days, the ruthless mage visited farm after farm, serving all Phaeradurans his gaze fell upon the same way, "raking astonished parsnip farmers with blue lightnings," as one eyewitness — a peddler who forthwith crept away westwards, abandoning his clanking pack — described it.

When all the realm lay silent in death (though there are the usual tales of farm children who fled into the trees to watch in horror, and even heirs of Athalric who escaped the harrowing of the inn), Ondeeme went to Calimshan, and began whispering in the ears of idle younglings there who desired magic and power of their own, bidding them come to his new realm before winter. Then he gathered his waiting

bondsmen, servants, and debtors, and returned to shattered Phaeradur to found the new kingdom of Ondeeme.

Under Ondeeme's iron rule (and the everpresent threat of his blasting magics), the forest was cleared with astonishing speed, and sheep farms like those that had made the new Mage-King wealthy were established. As would-be mages and malcontents from all over Calimshan began to arrive, Ondeeme lost no time in adopting the airs and fashions of that land; he wanted his own realm to stand as a beacon to the restless, lawless, and unwanted of Calimshan, the Tashalar, and the other coastal cities around the Shining Sea.

He succeeded in this all too well, finding his busy hands full of an endless succession of deceitful mages, cruel dopplegangers, slavers, smugglers, and thieves looking to establish new thieving-guild chapters. Vicious street-battles and covert murders became daily occurrences, and chaos rose to become the real ruler of the realm, Ondeeme went into hiding as he struggled to master modifications to an ancient spell he'd found, that he'd planned to putter

everwinking eye

BY ED GREENWOOD

away at leisurely for years. It was a magic that enabled its caster to mentally control (in a manner akin to a charm spell) any creature whose blood could be procured for the casting — a spell that could be combined with multiple castings of itself to form a large web of control over a dozen or more beings, if the caster could withstand the mental strain. Ondeeme could and did, successfully modifying and then using the spell to control nine and later eleven human mages of middling power. Treated well and ruled but lightly, they became his 'nobility' and war-officers, moving ruthlessly to establish his rule once more over the realm that bore his name.

Mastering his *bloodmage* charm spell took Ondeeme most of 1361 DR; it was late in the following year — 1362, the Year of the Helm — when he and his lordling mages emerged once more to seize control of the battleground of thugs that Blackalblade, Ondeeme's capital town, had become.

THE SLEE

Five of Ondeeme's controlled mages are Calishite men of mature years, one is a woman of like age, three are young and vigorous males, and two are young females. Known collectively to Ondeemans as the Slee (a word born of a bitter observation by one Blackalblade merchant that "they are the darkness in Ondeeme's sleeves"), these eleven mages consist of three Samphanars; four Oedellars, and four Nictars.

THE SAMPHANARS

Chief among the Slee is the coldly tight-lipped and careful, gaunt and private man known as Illem Asprardar. Holding the title of Samphanar of the Ondeemar (master of the castle), he is the closest thing to a trusted friend that the Mage-King has.

A rank beneath Asprardar are the Samphanar of Blackalblade (akin to a watch-captain for the town) and the Samphanar of the Lands (responsible for policing Ondeeme outside the walls of its capital, and based in a tiny keep overlooking Taermbold).

The Samphanar of Blackalblade is Saerma "Greyhips" Klalagh, a bitter and sadistic former lady escort of Schamedar who rules the town not just through the sixty-strong, leather-armored Night Watch (which despite its name patrols most heavily by day), but in particular by means of the many spies and 'fastknife' bravos in town who report only to her. Saerma's rages are legendary, and the rest of the Slee are said to fear her; whenever anyone exasperated by her tyrannies has moved to destroy or discipline her, the Mage-King has vanished, but Saerma has always managed to produce a hitherto-unknown enchanted item or magical trap to confound, humble, or destroy her challenger.

The Samphanar of the Lands is the sarcastic, handsome Caszhrim Nathloth, known across Ondeeme for his flowing yellow hair and goatee. He rides a griffon (or sometimes a sleek winged lizard, though some say this is but a transformation he works on underlings who've displeased him) steed through the skies to dart about Ondeeme, and has an eager eye for feminine beauty that is as ardent as that of the Mage-King himself.

Caszhrim is said to dabble (by means of bribes and rumor-mongering, placed through a busily-shuttling stream of peddler and caravan-merchant agents) in the politics of his native Almraiven, and spends his time exercising his elite Swords of Ondeemar (a force of cruel and capable armsmen who fight with long swords, daggers, lances, and crossbows, and wear supple scale mail supplanted with full plate armor when on guard duty). The "Slee-Swords" have skulked through every swamp and thicket of Ondeeme, folk say — and "gods-scourgedly-near every lady's bedchamber in the realm, too."

Our tour of the darksome, spell-ruled realm of Ondeeme (a land Elminster grimly describes as "a realm of far too many disguised mages for anyone's good") continues next issue. ■

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llurth dreier: city of ooze

BY ERIC L. BOYD

30th day of Hammer, Year of the Unstrung Harp

To Queen Alustriel of Silverymoon, Lady Hope of Luruar, does Drizzt Do'Urden send greetings.

Daughter of the Weave, I hear tales secondhand from my friend King Bruenor Battlehammer that my recent reports on the Realms Below have shaken the foundations of more than one of the Twelve Cities. He reports that at times your wise counsel is all that has held the Council of Twelve Peers together during moments of particularly heated debate. I wish you well in your continuing efforts to knit the goodly races into a shining jewel of the likes of fabled Myth Drannor, Ascalhorn, and Phalorm.

When I prepared my original report and the addendum on Underspires, I had not thought this missive of particular import to the security concerns of Luruar, for it reveals details of a realm that lies far beyond even distant Calimshan, and I have not been able to confirm its veracity. Nevertheless, certain troubling events in the past few weeks now suggest that, despite its apparent remoteness, activities in Llurth Dreier may well shape Menzoberranzan's future, and thus that of the Moonlands, for many years to come. Though I have no wish to trouble you with further nightmares perpetrated by my kin, I fear I must deliver this report to you, as well.

Since the release of the classic *Descent Into the Depths of the Earth*, *Shrine of the Kuo-toa*, and *Vault of the Drow* modules, fans of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® have been inspired to mount expeditions into the Underdark of their favorite campaign setting. Although alien in comparison to most surface settlements, Menzoberranzan, the City of Spiders, represents but one of the many exotic locales found in the depths of Abeir-Toril, the world of the Forgotten Realms campaign setting.

The recently released *Drizzt Do'Urden's Guide to the Underdark* attempts for the first time to detail the major subterranean settlements of the Sword Coast of Faerûn. Nevertheless, the Underdark contains many truly unique settings as yet unrevealed. Llurth Dreier, which lies beneath the grasslands of the Shaar and is believed to be the largest drow settlement in the Realms Below, is one such city. Underspires, the capitol of an expansionistic duergar kingdom that lies on the roof of a great rift in the earth, is another locale that escaped Drizzt Do'Urden's original report, details of which appear in DRAGON® Magazine #267.

Although this article details a subterranean city set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, Llurth Dreier works equally well in almost any campaign world with a large subterranean environment and deep-dwelling drow. For example, in the World of GREYHAWK®, where Ghaunadaur's place in the pantheon of gods is occupied by the Elder Elemental God, the City of Ooze might lie deep beneath the Yatil Mountains, far from the caverns of Erelhei-Cinlu (detailed in *Vault of the Drow* and *Dead Gods*) and the Sunless Sea (arguably detailed in *The Night Below* or DUNGEON® #70 – "The Kingdom of the Ghouls").

LLURTH DREIER

The City of Ooze occupies a cluster of vast, shallow caverns in the lower reaches of the Underdark, more than nine miles below the grasslands of the Shaar. Carved in eons past by a great subterranean lake fed by a nutrient-rich river that winds its way down from the surface, the caverns' water level has gradually subsided over the millennia, leaving behind a much smaller body of water encircled by huge, sprawling, fertile mud flats. A rocky plateau on the northwestern periphery of the city curves along the original lakeshore and is still home to the bulk of the population.

Warm, breathable air, tinted with the noxious odor of sulfur, steadily bubbles up through the ooze from the depths, ensuring a renewable air supply. The River Dreier supplies muddy, albeit potable, water to the fields and a rich supply of nutrients from the surface. The caverns that house Llurth Dreier have little in the way of mineral resources, except for rich beds of hizagkuur (a rare white metal refined from Underdark clay deposits that reflects all magic and emits powerful shocks on contact), but the city's immediate environs are awash with faerzress (Underdark radiation). Farther afield, miners from the City of Ooze have found modest veins of iron, silver, sulfur, and mithral. They also have unearthed many small gemstone deposits from the enveloping stone, including unworked jewels such as amaratha, amethysts, eye agates with blue circles, fire opals, dark-hued sapphires, yanolite (ophealine), and zendalure.

The mud flats revealed by the receding waters are sown with spores and serve as rich fields for a wide variety of fungal crops. Slaves tend large herds of cave pigs that feed on fungi grown in the muddy shallows. Smaller herds of deep rothé thrive on the rocky shores of the mud flat. Bats and other large fauna are uncommon, for the drow have hunted most such species into extinction. Smaller animal species, such as subterranean varieties of eels, leeches, salamanders, and slugs, thrive in this environment, slithering through the murk. Strange varieties of omnivorous amphibians, and all manner of oozes, jellies, and slimes, dwell here as well.

Who Rules: Since the defeat of the Spider Queen's followers by the faithful of Ghaunadaur, the City of Ooze has

been ruled by noble houses loyal to That Which Lurks. Delegates from each drow noble family are appointed to the ruling senate, a body known collectively as the Lords of the Elder Eye. The senate is riven by factionalism, backstabbing, and short-lived alliances, reflecting the never-ending power struggles between the various noble houses. Leading Lords of the Elder Eye include Bruherd Aintadaur (CE drow em F17) of House Aintadaur, Viconia Dau'Sharcorl (CE drow ef W(N)19) of House Dau'Sharcorl, Drisinil Nerintadaka (CE drow ef F14/T15) of House Nerintadaka, Tarlyn Tazintela (CE drow em F13/W12) of House Tazintela, Nym Warbhaerdyrn (CE drow em F12/P13-Ghaunadaur) of House Ti Warbhaerdyrn, Phaere Vin'taelhess (CE drow ef F16) of House Vin'taelhess, and Lesaonar Zygorkh (CE drow em P16-Ghaunadaur) of House Zygorkh'Ga.

Who Really Rules: Although the City of Ooze is nominally ruled by the drow who make up the bulk of the city's population, the true masters of Llurth Dreier are the aboleth. Collectively, these piscine monsters magically and psionically dominate key members of the drow and slave populations, enabling them to rule unchecked. Unlike some aboleth-ruled cities, a single Grand Savant has never ruled the aboleth of Llurth Dreier. Instead, members of the elite savant aboleth caste form the Grand Cabal, a deliberative assembly nominally subordinate to the Lords of the Elder Eye that can spend years in mindlinked debate before reaching a decision by consensus. As presently constituted, leading members of the Grand Cabal include Nevek'Dithasig (NE savant aboleth Psi12/M17/P11 of Ghaunadaur), Torop'Jethixur (LE savant aboleth Psi16/M13/P10 of Ghaunadaur) and Mavad'Nidhuned (CE savant aboleth Psi10/M12/P19 of Ghaunadaur). There is little direct conflict between the various factions of the Grand Cabal, for most political battles are fought through proxies among the Lords of the Elder Eye.

Population: Some 400,000 drow dwell in the City of Ooze, making Llurth Dreier the largest Ssri-Tel'Quessir enclave in the Realms Below since the fall of Telantiwar. Internecine warfare, which keeps dark elven numbers in check in most drow societies, is ruthlessly suppressed by the aboleth overlords of Llurth Dreier, which has enabled the total drow population to soar to its current level. Of that number, perhaps as many as 6,000 drow (1.5%) are actually ghaunadan masquerading in drow form. In addition, more than 12,000 aboleth dwell in the City of Ooze, of which more than 240 (2%) are savant aboleth. As noted previously, countless oozes, jellies, and slimes also make their home amidst the city's mud flats, but few are sentient. Finally, the drow and aboleth are served by nearly 500,000 slaves, making Llurth Dreier one of the largest cities in all Faerûn. The slave population includes dark skum (a more powerful variant of common skum with many magical abilities reminiscent of their drow ancestors), gold dwarves, kuo-toa, myconids, slithermorphs, svirfneblin, and a handful of other races.

Major Products: Agriculture produce (primarily edible varieties of fungi), cave pigs, gemstones, slaves, sulfur, and unworked hizagkuur.

Armed Forces: The armies of Llurth Dreier have long terrorized the Shaardark, as the extensive region of tunnels and caverns west of the Landrise are known. The city's armed forces, which number more than 200,000 soldiers, are divided into 1,000 tentacles, each of which is commanded by an aboleth marshal. Each tentacle includes a score or more of dominated drow commanders of noble blood. The drow commanders in turn command slave levies of ten or more troops. Each levy is made up of slaves of a single racial type, the most common of which are drow commoners, dark skum, and slithermorphs. Most tentacles are assigned to guard duty in the muddy fields of Llurth Dreier, ensuring dutiful subservience from the slaves that labor in the muck. The remainder patrol tunnels and caverns within a hundred or so miles of the City of Ooze, often skirmishing with the Westserpent, as the western army of the Deep Realm of the gold dwarves is known. However, despite their numbers, it should be noted that aboleth-dominated troops have proven far less effective than free-willed soldiers, reducing the overall impact of Llurth Dreier's massive army.

The Fanatics of the Overflowing Pit are an elite order of fanatical drow crusaders dedicated to That Which Lurks who wage endless war on the clergies of rival faiths. More than 500 male and female drow are members of the Fanatics of the Overflowing Pit at any given time, although the exact number varies by as much as one-tenth of the average total. The order can trace its origins back to the

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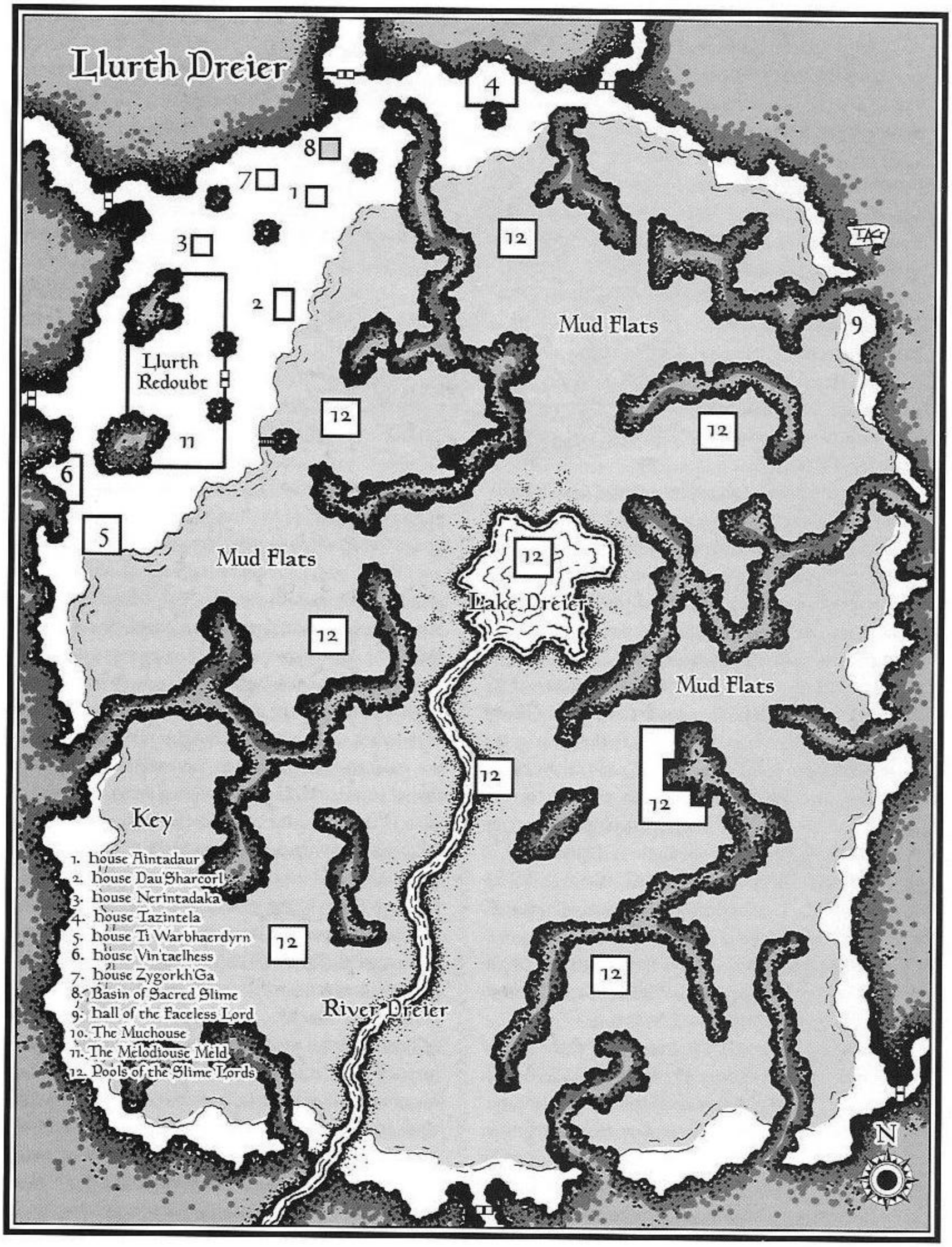
height of Ilythiir, a great empire that encompassed the moon and dark elf domains in forests south of the Lake of Steam that once covered the Shaar, ere the Descent of the Drow. This ancient brotherhood was resuscitated in Llurth Dreier during the Webfire Wars, and its crusaders have plagued the southern Underdark ever since.

Notable Mages & Sages: As an aboleth acquires all of its parent's knowledge at birth and a mature aboleth acquires the knowledge of any being it consumes, the rulers of Llurth Dreier collectively compose one of the greatest assemblies of sages in all of Faerûn. Each successive generation of aboleth is expected to expand on the knowledge base of its ancestors, leading to ever-increasing degrees of specialization. Long ago, the ruling savants decreed that an aboleth near death was to be consumed by an aboleth of a different family line, so as to ensure the continued cross-pollination of knowledge.

Durun'Viphesat (CE savant aboleth Psi11/W(T)21/P10 of Ghaunadaur), descended from the aboleth breeders who developed skum (and, later, dark skum) from human, demi-human, and humanoid genetic stock, is Llurth Dreier's foremost scholar in the art of magical transmutation. Of great import to the aboleth of Llurth Dreier, Durun'Viphesat has succeeded in crossing drow with illithids to create a new species of servitor known as lithidrow. Resembling normal drow with a trio of tentacles in lieu of each arm, lithidrow can plunder thoughts much like an illithid by inserting their tentacles directly into a victim's brain. The benefit of



such is that lithidrow can act as far-ranging agents for the aboleth, stealing knowledge from across the Realms, and then return home to be consumed by their masters. With the backing of the Grand Cabal, Durun'Viphesat has dispatched its agents far and wide across the Underdark, to great success. In the Year of the Prince (1357 DR), one notable failure made it as far as the gates of Menzoberranzan before it was mysteriously slain.

Kijik'Jethixur (LE aboleth Psi22), one of the more powerful aboleth who is not a member of the savant caste, is the foremost authority on the Invisible Art (psionics) and illithids in Llurth Dreier. Thought to have consumed at least one elder brain, as well as numerous representatives of other psionically skilled species, Kijik'Jethixur is in the forefront of research into new psionic disciplines. Kijik'Jethixur is considered a heretic by its fellow aboleth, and its veneration of That Which Lurks is considered suspect. There have been rumors that Kijik'Jethixur and its followers are plotting to secretly emigrate from Llurth Dreier, a development that the Grand Cabal would almost certainly oppose.

Notable Clergy & Churches: Ghaunadaur's faithful wholly dominate Llurth Dreier, and the veneration of other deities is strictly forbidden. Cults of other gods are harshly suppressed, even among the slave population, and followers of Lolth the Spider Queen, preeminent goddess of the drow, and Piscaethces the Blood Queen, primary god of the aboleth, are singled out for particular persecution.

As every member of the Grand Cabal is a high priest of Ghaunadaur, there are at least as many temples in the City of Ooze as there are savant aboleth. Although nominally united in the worship of Ghaunadaur, most temples are tightly coupled with an independent sect of the Elder Eye, whose theology teaches that it is the true faith. Each temple's clergy is drawn from the ranks of common aboleth, drow, and, in some cases, a handful of ghaunadan. The bulk of a congregation is typically drawn from drow commoners directly or indirectly controlled or dominated by the senior priests. The most prominent temples are tightly coupled with a powerful drow noble house, for there is little separation of religious and political authority in Llurth Dreier.

- **Basin of Sacred Slime** [8], temple complex to Ghaunadaur; Mavad'Nidhuned (see above); 28 aboleth priests, 112 drow priests, 3,298 followers. Perhaps the most prominent temple in Llurth Dreier, this temple complex consists of a stepped bowl-shaped depression carved into the cavern floor, over which hangs a massive stalactite. Slime drips off the pinnacle above into the natural amphitheater below. As the basin of slime never overflows and the stalagmite never dries out, many posit that some sort of magic must be at work. The slime itself has many of the same properties as aboleth mucous, enabling non-aquatic worshipers to swim indefinitely amidst the legions of oozes, slimes, and jellies that populate the basin. During religious ceremonies, crowds gather on the upper steps of the basin, just above the surface of the slime, in order to observe manifestations of the Elder Eye. This sect is closely allied with House Zygorkh'Ga.
- **Hall of the Faceless Lord** [9], temple complex to Juiblex (Ghaunadaur); Tyxyr'Nidhuned (NE savant aboleth Psi15/M11/P16 of Ghaunadaur); 19 aboleth priests, 72 drow priests, 1,629 followers. Carved into the wall of a remote fungi cavern far from the heart of Llurth Dreier, this temple complex lies partially beneath the water table of the mud flats, and as a result is flooded with several feet of murk on its main level. Lower catacombs are entirely flooded with noxious ooze. The Hall of the Faceless Lord consists of a series of increasingly horrific chambers. The walls, floors, and ceilings of the complex are covered with a thin layer of ooze in which are trapped the tormented souls of past sacrifices. Each soul is capable of manifesting only as a blurred two-dimensional depiction of its former shape twisted by madness. Cutting into the ooze does not provide any release or escape, but it does release a torrent of decaying blood that burns like acid any living thing it touches. More than one adventuring band from the surface has been hired to find and destroy this temple, so far without success, for most sacrifices are humans or demihumans brought into the city as slaves. The tormented souls trapped in the temple's walls cannot achieve lasting peace while the temple remains undefiled, and until such time they have the ability to plague the nightmares of those who sold them into slavery for as long as they live or remain in the Realms. This sect is closely allied with House Dau'Sharcorl.

Notable Guilds: Closely related aboleth share a great deal of the same knowledge base, although each individual aboleth is expected to advance its own unique area of specialization. In essence, groups of closely related aboleth and their servitor craftsmen form guilds, for such is their specialization that distantly related aboleth cannot compete with their knowledge base. Every generation, a handful of aboleth so advance their area of specialization that they far outpace their siblings and cousins, in essence creating a new guild and a new familial line. (The last three syllables of an aboleth's name reflect the last three recognized familial line formations in its heritage.) Over time, a succession of such splits have led to a strong differentiation of responsibilities among the major aboleth familial lines, and ever-increasing specialization among the aboleth populace. At present, the most prominent aboleth familial lines include Dithasig (fungiculture), Jethixur (Invisible Art), Nidhuned (theology), Taphenos (glyphlore), Viphesat (slave-breeding), and Xarhunig (trading), although more than twelve score recognized familial lines (and hence guilds) exist.

Equipment Shops: Full. (Items selling for 500 gp or less are available in the city, and more expensive items can be acquired for those willing to wait or pay a lot.)

Adventurer's Quarters: Few nonresidents visit the noxious City of Ooze for obvious reasons, and most inter-city trade between Llurth Dreier and its neighbors occurs in outlying holds on the edge of the aboleth-dominated domain. Nevertheless, on rare occasions visitors do visit the City of Ooze, and a handful of establishments cater to their needs.

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- **The Muchouse** [10] (fair/moderate) lies within Llurth Dreier's muddy fields, catering primarily to those who must meet directly with the aboleth or inspect the produce of Llurth Dreier's fungi fields. The inn itself is carved from a thick column that rises up through the mud, linked to dry land by a hanging bridge of calcified shrieker stalks. The house specialty is fermented aboleth mucous, a syrupy drink barely palatable to non-dominated surface dwellers that confers the water-breathing ability of aboleth mucous.
- **The Melodious Meld** [11] (good/expensive), situated in the massive structure known as the Llurth Redoubt, doubles as a tavern and perhaps the most unusual concert hall in all of Faerûn. Run by several members of the Mushanis aboleth lineage, this establishment is devoted to study of music communicated via the Invisible Art. Members of this minor guild are aware that music cannot be truly appreciated by dominated slaves, so visitors from outside the city are recruited throughout the Realms Below and Above and encouraged to attend. Not a few Southern bards have made their way willingly or unwillingly to the Odious Meld (as it is sometimes called), and echoes of these disturbing melodies have begun to appear in ballads heard throughout the South. For now, such influences are apparently innocuous, if unsettling, but at least one current Master Harper worries that the aboleth of Llurth Dreier seek eventually to twist the minds of listeners into venerating That Which Lurks.

Important Characters: Jylyx'Taphenos (LE aboleth Psi11), dwells in the Calishite city of Suldulphor, in the guise of a curvaceous human sorceress, Ballaera Heerilyte (NG hf W10). Within the past generation, a minor branch of the Taphenos line of Llurth Dreier has acquired many of the powers of mirrorkin ('greater dopplegangers'), enabling them to absorb and adopt new identities and guises almost without fear of detection. For some time now, Jylyx'Taphenos has been dwelling in Suldulphor, using "her" position to plunder Calimshan's rich heritage of magical lore, the first of her immediate kin to maintain such a masquerade outside the confines of the City of Ooze. Within the past decade, Jylyx'Taphenos has developed an inkling of the existence of the Twisted Rune (a cabal of incredibly powerful undead sorcerors that rule much of the South from far behind the scenes), and she has communicated such back to the Grand Cabal. Word of this group's existence has greatly alarmed the savant caste, and "Ballaera" now spends much of her energy attempting to thwart the efforts of those minor agents of the Twisted Rune that "she" has identified as active in Suldulphor. Further details on Ballaera may be found in Empires of the Shining Sea.

Important Features in Town: Llurth Dreier consists of three distinct regions. The original city lies on a relatively dry plateau on what was once the northwestern shore of Lake Dreier. Home to the bulk of the land-dwelling population, the plateau is dominated by the Llurth Redoubt, once the massive fortress-villa of the drow House Llurth and now a sprawling slave warren whose walls act more as a prison than as a defensive fortification. The rest of the plateau is dominated by the various noble houses, most of which are constructed of mud dredged from the former lake bottom and magically transformed into stone. The mud flats form a second region of the city, home to all manner of oozes, slimes, and jellies, as well as water-dwelling slaves such as kuo-toa and skum. Land-dwelling races spend countless hours up to their waists in muck tending the fungal crops, but none actually live on the mud flats. Scattered throughout the mud flats are the Pools of the Slime Lords. These walled enclosures are home to the bulk of the aboleth populace, and, although murky, are largely free of sediment. What remains of Lake Dreier is now the exclusive preserve of the Grand Cabal, and it is from within these dark waters that the teeming populace of the City of Ooze is ruled.

Of particular note to nonnatives who stray from the dry plateau is the fact that the savant aboleth of Llurth Dreier

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are unmatched in their mastery of savant glyphs. Much of their control over the City of Ooze is rooted in the hundreds or even thousands of glyphs inscribed into the rock floor beneath the mud flats. Glyphs of creeping horror, glyphs of enslavement, glyphs of watching, glyphs of devouring the mind, and glyphs of a thousand tentacles, as well as many unique glyphs crafted by the true masters of Llurth Dreier, are known to lie beneath the murk. (See Dragon #222, pp. 90-92, for details on these and other savant glyphs.) Some of these savant glyphs are believed to date back to before the founding of the City of Ooze, and fanatic followers of That Which Lurks claim that the oldest were fashioned by an avatar of Ghaunadaur ere the Descent of the Drow.

Local Lore: Llurth Dreier was founded circa –7,600 DR during the Scattering of the Drow, the great diaspora from Telantiwar precipitated by the collapse of Bhaerynden and the formation of the Great Rift. As their empire crumbled, many drow refugees fled westward beneath the grasslands of the Shaar and northwards under the Inner Sea lands to carve out new homelands. House Llurth was among the most prominent of Telantiwar's noble families to survive the chaos largely unscathed, thanks in large part to having wisely withdrawn to their outlying holdings in the months before Bhaerynden's collapse. In the years that followed, many refugees gravitated to House Llurth's stronghold on the subterranean shores of Lake Dreier, a sprawling freshwater basin fed by the mighty River Dreier and drained by the porous rock that lay beneath, creating a settlement that in time grew into a city in its own right.

In the centuries that followed, Llurth Dreier, as the subterranean lakeshore city came to be called, evolved along the lines of many drow settlements ruled by the Way of Lolth. The founding noble house fractured into competing families ruled by matron mothers, each of which engaged in an endless and brutal struggle for station. The most powerful matron mothers served on the ruling council, overseeing all aspects of life in their city. Although other sects and faiths existed in secret, the Lolth-backed matriarchy maintained a firm hold over the city's populace.

Llurth Dreier's decline into sectarian violence was precipitated by the gradual silting of Lake Dreier. As the waters slowly receded, the various noble houses grew wealthy by expanding their fungi farms into the rich mud flats left behind. Legions of drow commoners and slaves were employed in the muddy fields, making Llurth Dreier the breadbasket of the southern reaches of the Underdark. Aboleth were recruited by the noble houses as overseers, for the drow nobility preferred counting coins to wading into the fields themselves. As more and more of the lake bottom was tilled, ancient, long buried artifacts and ruins were unearthed with increasing frequency. The clergy of Lolth tried to confiscate every relic found, for most of the recovered objects were sacred to Ghaunadaur, but many relics with magical powers were hidden away in the vaults of the various noble families eager to gain an edge over their rivals.

By –5,500 DR, shape-shifting oozes had begun to emerge from the muddy fields with increasing regularity. The ghaunadan, as they came to be known, infiltrated the populace, including the nobility, and many houses secretly switched allegiance from the Spider Queen to That Which Lurks. Battles within the nobility began to take on religious overtones, and the tangled web of alliances and enmities between the various houses gradually coalesced into two hostile camps. The ghaunadan recruited many members of the aboleth minority into Ghaunadaur's faith as well, enabling them to gain a strong foothold in the power structures of like-minded drow noble houses, and the first members of the aboleth savant caste are believed to have appeared in Llurth Dreier around this time.

Outright civil war was precipitated by the consecration of the first temple openly dedicated to Ghaunadaur, the Hall of Writhing Tentacles (which was quickly destroyed). From –5,112 DR to –4,835 DR, the Webfire Wars raged throughout Llurth Dreier, pitting the Spider Queen's faithful against the followers of That Which Lurks. Despite heavy initial losses, Ghaunadaur's drow followers, led by aboleth military advisors, won a slight majority of the battles that ensued, a military advantage that increased with time, as the steady trickle of Lolth's followers fleeing into exile grew into a torrent. Refugees from Llurth Dreier founded new cities, such as Sshamath and Naernth-Dar, and word of such havens induced even more followers of the Spider Queen to abandon Llurth Dreier. Followers of other gods fled as well, and, following the destruction of the last remaining noble house loyal to the Spider Queen, only the followers of Ghaunadaur remained in the City of Ooze.

Despite their victory, three centuries of warfare had left Llurth Dreier in ruins. Although the drow nobility continued to rule in name, they had been forced to cede real authority to the aboleth during the war. All thoughts by the drow of reclaiming their former authority collapsed after the savant aboleth allowed word of their existence to spread among the populace. In the centuries that followed, Llurth Dreier reclaimed its regional prominence under the direction of the aboleth. Once again the mud flats of Lake Dreier overflowed with agricultural produce, and wealth poured into the city. With internecine warfare among the drow suppressed, the population soared, and the city has grown in power and influence ever since.

ENVIRONS OF LLURTH DREIER

Llurth Dreier's power is such that it dominates the whole of the Underdark beneath the Shaar, and other races dwell there only under the sufferance of the ruling aboleth cabal. Nevertheless, the more distant environs of the City of Ooze harbor numerous realms strong enough to threaten Llurth Dreier, including the gold dwarves of the Deep Realm, the duergar of the Steel Kingdom, the beholders of Ilt'Zokir, and the Lolth-venerating matriarchies of several drow cities.

Some of the nearby locations have been discussed in *"Elminster's Everwinking Eye,"* including the abandoned drow city of Naernth-Dar (POLYHEDRON #109) to the northwest, the fallen dwarven hold of Copperdelve (POLYHEDRON #111) west of Naernth-Dar, and the two-mile-deep Emyrsar Lake (POLYHEDRON #119), south of Copperdelve. The Asglyth, a realm of illithids, and Vaerndoun, a great subterranean cavern-complex, are

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both discussed in *Prayers from the Faithful*, p. 19, and are located northeast of Llurth Dreier, in the southeastern foothills of the Firestep Mountains. Tathtar, beneath the Deepwash, is discussed in Lands of Intrigue. Finally, the duergar city of Underspires, capitol of the Steel Kingdom, is located under the mountains northwest of Turmish, and is fully detailed in DRAGON #267.

LESHYNMUL

The city of Leshynmul lies off the coast of Turmish, deep beneath the Sea of Fallen Stars, in the heart of the Hmur Plateau. In the aftermath of the Second Serôs War and the collapse of the Kuo-Toan Consortiums, many gogglers fled into the flooded caverns beneath the sea via the Tunnels of Iratis. There they founded the City of Coral Caverns in caves carved from an ancient seabed. However, weakened by their battles with the sea elves, newly founded Leshynmul quickly fell under the domination of aboleth tunneling up from below.

Not unlike Llurth Dreier, where the aboleth dominate a large drow majority, Leshynmul is now ruled by an aboleth minority, served by a kuo-toan slave populace. However, unlike the City of Ooze, Leshynmul is ruled by a Grand Savant and dominated by the worship of Pisaethces the Blood Queen. After centuries of quietly expanding their rule of the caverns honeycombing the Hmur Plateau, the ruling aboleth are now beginning to extend their tentacles into the Sea of Fallen Stars. A nascent alliance with the duergar of neighboring Underspires holds dangerous portents for both the surrounding Underdark and the depths of Serôs, for both the City of Sunken Spires and the City of Coral Caverns seek to conquer and enslave neighboring settlements in the near future. Should the aboleth of Leshynmul make their presence too widely known, however, they might well become the targets of a great crusade by the armies of Llurth Dreier.

UNDRAETH

The City of the Spider Queen lies in the upper reaches of the Underdark, scarcely a mile beneath the roots of the Aphrunn Mountains of southern Turmish.

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For centuries, Queen Nathglaryst, a sorceress and priestess of Lolth of incredible power, has ruled this city of 12,000 drow. Nathglaryst is truly mad, and Lolth's love of chaos is fed by the crazed whims of this all-powerful queen. Worshiped as an avatar of the Spider Queen by her subjects, Nathglaryst brooks no rival to her absolute rule. As a result, Lolth's clergy in Undraeth is made up only of low and mid-ranking priestesses, most of whom are direct descendants of the queen. Few of her subjects dare to ascend in power, for doing so is said to inevitably lead to serving as a sacrifice on the altar of Lolth.

What little is know of Undraeth in the Realms Above stems from the two wars that Nathglaryst has waged (and lost) with surface dwellers. In the Year of Tatters (527 DR), the queen's kobold legions failed to conquer the city-state of Hlondeth. Centuries later, circa 1150 DR, the Harpers disrupted her profitable slave trade with the Red Wizards of Thay. When the drow queen mustered her forces to attack the mercenary army hired by the Harpers, Elminster, Khelben, and the growing ranks of Harper wizards collapsed the mineshaft by which they were heading to the surface. Nathglaryst's power base outside of Undraeth was shattered by the Harpers' treachery, and her once growing realm has withered in the face of repeated skirmishes with the hated duergar of Underspires.

Twice stymied in her efforts to forge an empire, Nathglaryst now sees reclaiming the lost legacies of Telantiwar as a critical step toward achieving her dreams of empire. To this end, the mad queen has dispatched agents throughout the Underdark of the South to track down every rumor of Telantiwar's relics and recover what still remains. Her agents are being discovered with increasing frequency in Llurth Dreier, much to the annoyance the aboleth elite, and there are rumors that the Fanatics of the Overflowing Pit will soon march north to crush the self-styled Spider Queen.

CURRENT CLACK

- Clashes between the Westserpent of the Deep Realm and Llurth Dreier's tentacles have increased in recent months, far above the normal level of skirmishing between these subterranean titans. Many of these attacks are rumored to be directed at the supply lines of the Army of Gold, suggesting that the drow (or more accurately the aboleth) of the City of Ooze are working to undermine the gold dwarves' effort to reclaim Shanatar. The tangled alliances and enmities of the Underdark make it difficult to tell if Llurth Dreier has forged an alliance with the duergar of Underspires, or if these attacks are coincidental and simply work to the benefit of the Steel Kingdom.
- Word has reached Jylyx'Taphenos in Suldophor that "her" renegade cousin, Visil'Taphenos, has established itself as sage of dwarven lore in the kuo-toan city of Sloopdilmonpolop, beneath Firedrake Bay. Members of the Taphenos lineage are now said to be in conclave, intent on eventually capturing and then consuming their errant kin, so that its lineage of lore is restored to the City of Ooze.
- The City of Ooze has long been the talk of scarcely believed legends along the eastern shore of the Shining Sea. In Ormpar, talk has once again turned to the fate of Alabhansree Alanasker, who vanished almost a decade ago, as she is now thought to be imprisoned in the slave pits of Llurth Dreier. Her father, High Suihk Helbareim "the Stormwind" Alanasker, has nearly bankrupted Ormpar's treasury in his fruitless quest to recover the missing Chansreena (princess), having followed up one false lead after another. He is said to be actively recruiting adventuring companies to capture a drow princess from Llurth Dreier, in hopes that a prisoner transfer might eventually be arranged. (Details on Alabhansree's true fate are revealed in *FA1 – Halls of the High King*. This rumor is nothing but a red herring rife with misinformation, although it threatens to enmesh Ormpar in a war in cannot win with the City of Ooze.) ■

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GATEWAY TO RAVENS DEEP BY HEATHER VAN BUREN

In 1452 DR, a collection of letters was discovered in the ruins of the Blacktree estates, outside Ravens Bluff. The letters were written in 1370 DR, when Lord Charles Blacktree led the most competent and storied heroes of Ravens Bluff into the Underdark on a quest to locate the sacred *Orb of Protection*. The first Letter is reproduced below.

Lord Charles Frederik LaVerne Blacktree IV spent his reckless youth bathed in the excesses of almost every vice available to a young man with a drive for the decadent pleasures of nobility. He seemed in all ways the direct opposite of the proper, well-mannered Lady Katherine of the House Moorland. It raised the eyebrows of many socialites in Ravens Bluff, then, when the two announced plans to marry. That the marriage has lasted has surprised nearly everyone, given Katherine's well-known penchant for responsibility and Charles' reputation as a rich playboy. Whatever their bond, it is generally thought to be strong and true.

Lady Katherine Marie Moorland (Blacktree) is the head of the Moorland estate. The Moorlands are not wealthy by lordly

standards, but have enough to live a comfortable life. Katherine enjoyed great popularity in her youth, due in no small part to her work as Lady Speaker of the Council of Lords. Unlike many of her fellow nobles, she prefers simple dress and pleasures, shying away from ceremony and formality. A straightforward woman, Katherine knows what she wants and she almost always knows how to get it. Katherine's no-nonsense manner might have been just what the lascivious Charles needed to put him in line.

Only within the last decade, when the armies of the warlord Myrkyssa Jelan laid siege upon the city, did Blacktree rise from his effete predilections and make himself an important player in the political and military spheres of Ravens Bluff. The war itself was a blossoming period for Charles. His reputation went from that of a foolish dandy to that of a well-respected, courageous, commanding Field Marshal. Challenge seems to bring out the best in him, a trait that may have contributed to a post-war campaign to become mayor of Ravens Bluff. Though bested by Lady Amber Thoden, he put up an excellent fight, and many suggest that he might renew his candidacy at the soonest possible opportunity.

After the failed mayoral campaign, Lord Blacktree showed signs of reverting to his former habits, perhaps out of boredom. Much to Katherine's chagrin, Charles soon became embroiled in the search for the *Heart of Bane*, a powerful artifact of evil said to have been stolen from the outer planes and hidden in Ravens Bluff by powerful (if perhaps foolish) adventurers. When it was discovered that the *Heart* acted as a beacon for lower planar interlopers, and when the presence of said interlopers began to cause severe loss of life and property in the city, Lord Blacktree was called upon to find a solution to the problem.

That solution was given form by tales told by time-displaced dwarves who had once been inhabitants of the Realm of Glimmering Swords, an ancient dwarven kingdom based in the mountains near

10 Highsun, 1370 DR

Dearest Katherine,

It has been one week since we first ventured into the labyrinthine darkness of Lower Sarbreen. I know every step takes me farther away from you, but I continue my quest, knowing that if I am successful you will be as safe as I can make you. You know that I would do anything in my power to protect you from harm, and finding the Orb is the best way I can do that right now. I can only hope we are successful, and I am not missing my last opportunity to see your smile, hear your laugh, and hold you in my arms again. When I close my eyes at night, you are there, and sometimes I can even feel you looking back at me. Should anything happen to me, I want you to know that despite our occasional spats I wouldn't have rather shared my life with anyone else, nor would I have changed a thing, except perhaps to be a man more deserving of your affections. Keep yourself safe for me. Perhaps these young adventurers will stop making trouble for me to clean up, and we will have the opportunity to grow old together after all.

Our rag-tag group has established a hold, of sorts, a collection of tents near an abandoned duergar village. Some of the men have taken to calling our little home away from home "Ravens Deep." We are starting to gather supplies for some more permanent dwellings, but I am holding off construction until we have better established whether or not we will be maintaining this position.

How do you feel about beards? I find it almost impossible to keep a clean shave down here, and am considering sporting one, as they are easier to maintain without much water. Do you think I will look too rugged? It is important to maintain some aura of civilization down here – I think it keeps the men in order and in better spirits.

Dangers abound, my love. I believe the tactic of sending experienced adventurers to scout out and secure new areas for the regular troops to maintain is the most prudent. I just hope enough adventurers are willing to volunteer themselves for this cause. Perhaps you could use your wonderful people skills to spread the word throughout the community. . . I know your face would look much lovelier on posters than mine. I could never say no to you, so I can't imagine anyone else being able to, either.

I miss you terribly and cannot wait to be with you again.

Until next we embrace. . .
Love forever,
Blackie

Lord and Lady Charles and Katherine Blacktree

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what would become Ravens Bluff. These dwarves told of a artifact known as the *Orb of Protection*, a powerfully enchanted gem known to the drow as *Annasherian*, the *Rock of Nothingness*. The dwarves explained that the *Orb* had fallen from the sky in ancient days, and, after much work with archmages and much travel across the elemental planes, it had gained the ability to negate all magic in its presence. Mayor Thoden decided that the *Orb* was the best weapon against the *Heart of Bane*. Lord Blacktree was called to the service of the city, and the pursuit of the artifact that would be the salvation of Ravens Bluff commenced shortly thereafter.

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS RAVENS DEEP?

Some ten days below the surface, in the tunnel system known as Lower Sarbreen, a traveler comes upon an immense cavern, perhaps a half-mile from wall to wall. Upon reaching this natural chamber, many think themselves on the surface, since the faintly glowing lichens growing on the ceiling far above conjure memories of a brilliant starfield. This is a living cavern, the site of acres and acres of fungal growth. It is also the site of a human outpost: Ravens Deep.

Ravens Deep is the base camp for Lord Charles Blacktree's operation in the Underdark. The camp is situated within the crumbling walls of a duergar village cleared of an undead infestation by one of the first groups of adventurers to penetrate the Underdark. Most of the duergar buildings are collapsed or burned to their foundation, though a few remain as habitations for Blacktree's officers. Most of the men and women who call Ravens Deep their home live in tents brought from the surface. No one remembers exactly how the collection of tents and ruined buildings came to be called Ravens Deep, but it seems likely that one of the workers named it such to feel that much closer to home.

The settlement is unofficially divided into four segments, situated around a central fountain. "Tent Town" is home to most residents of Ravens Deep. Here, Lord Blacktree's unassuming command tent stands at the center of dozens of similar structures, home to soldiers, artisans, translators, and adventurers. Because Blacktree sees value in reminding his charges of life above the surface, he has several continual light torches lit during the "day." These are dimmed or extinguished upon "nightfall," though due to the great distance from the sun and moon, the particulars of this process owe much to guesswork.

Residents refer to the northwest quadrant of Ravens Deep as "The Farm," since the space is dominated by an immense field of fungus that spreads beyond the duergar walls. The source of much of the life in the cavern is a broken aqueduct that supplies water to a pool known colloquially as Amber Lake, named for the Lady Mayor of Ravens Bluff.

The southeastern corner of Ravens Deep, where the original walls of the duergar village remain strong, is home to the so-called Mercy Ward, where injured adventurers returning from exploration receive the attentions of healers and surgeons. Here too dwells the underside of Ravens Deep society, the criminals freed from imprisonment on the surface and employed as common laborers in the realm below.

The southwestern corner of Ravens Deep is dominated by uninhabited duergar ruins. Though adventurers cleared these unstable structures of rubble and other hazards, at least three buildings are thought to be haunted. The entire area is shunned.

Ravens Deep grows and changes every day, but it seems likely that these rough divisions will remain. Blacktree's advisors have already marked ground for a potential ambassadorial structure, and as the quest for the *Orb of Protection* grows ever longer, it seems likely that tents will be abandoned for more permanent structures, or that the influx in adventurers will cause the settlement to expand beyond its walls and into the cavern beyond.

RAVENS DEEP ENCOUNTER KEY

The battlements surrounding Ravens Deep were originally 8' tall, though time and several ancient assaults have worn them down considerably. In some cases, such as most of the eastern reaches of the village, these walls have been completely destroyed. Lord Blacktree awaits the arrival of more wizards from the city above, since he has ambitious plans to replace missing wall sections with permanent magical *walls of stone*.

At any given time, Ravens Deep is home to roughly 350 men and women. Additionally, the prisoner's compound (Area 15) houses 150 criminals, mostly non-violent offenders working off their sentences under a special writ from the Lady Mayor herself. Ravens Deep's transient population consists of powerful adventurers loyal to Ravens Bluff and the quest for the *Orb of Protection*. These groups typically organize themselves into bands of six or seven members, with a good selection of races and classes. Generally, each group contains at least two fighters and two mages, though these are frequently dual or multiclassed. Levels range from 9-12, with occasional exceptions on both sides of the spectrum. Blacktree likes to utilize adventurers both at home and on the front, so while only one band is usually "in the field" at any one time, two generally remain to help with repairs, healing, and analyzing data recovered during exploratory expeditions. All adventurers, regardless of social standing or military rank, share standard-issue tents while visiting Ravens Deep.

TENT TOWN

1. BLACKTREE'S COMMAND TENT

Blacktree's command tent is a modest structure, appearing little different than the dozens of tents that provide housing for even his lowest-ranked soldiers. Despite appearances, however, it is in fact the best-watched dwelling in the entire village, as several tents nearby are more guard stations than actual dwellings. By hiding their general among the rank and file, the soldiers of Ravens Deep seek to protect his identity from unseen enemies. Blacktree himself knows the danger of low morale in a

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camp so far from home, and thus shares only those resources available to his soldiers.

The interior of Blacktree's tent is covered in maps, scrolls, books, and battle plans. A paper-covered crate serves as the Field Marshal's desk, and visitors are encouraged to seat themselves on makeshift stools fashioned from broken sections of masonry. It is here, in this humble tent, that Lord Blacktree runs the entire Underdark operation, meeting with his officers twice daily and briefing or debriefing adventurers as they arrive from the surface and before and after crucial scouting missions.

2. MESS HALL

The original duergar mess hall was utterly destroyed in some forgotten battle. Its foundations lie in the shadows of the southwestern walls. Blacktree's men erected a huge pavilion tent at the center of Tent Town within a week of discovering the village, using crates and boxes as tables and chairs to create an impromptu dining hall. It is in many ways a typical army eating establishment, offering metal plates topped with mashed potatoes, a dab of strange fungus, and mystery meat, a culinary guessing game made all the more difficult by the alien fauna of the Underdark. The mess hall is administered by Ravens Deep's Chief Cook, Gustaf Casimir [LG 1/2m Pr8-Yondalla], an orderly fellow who appears every bit the general when shouting orders to his assistants. Gustaf, an excellent cook, coordinates meals for all inhabitants of Ravens Bluff, from Lord Blacktree to the lowliest prison menial. His arrival marked an important change in the health and morale of the inhabitants of Ravens Deep, who he does his best to stuff to bursting at every mealtime.

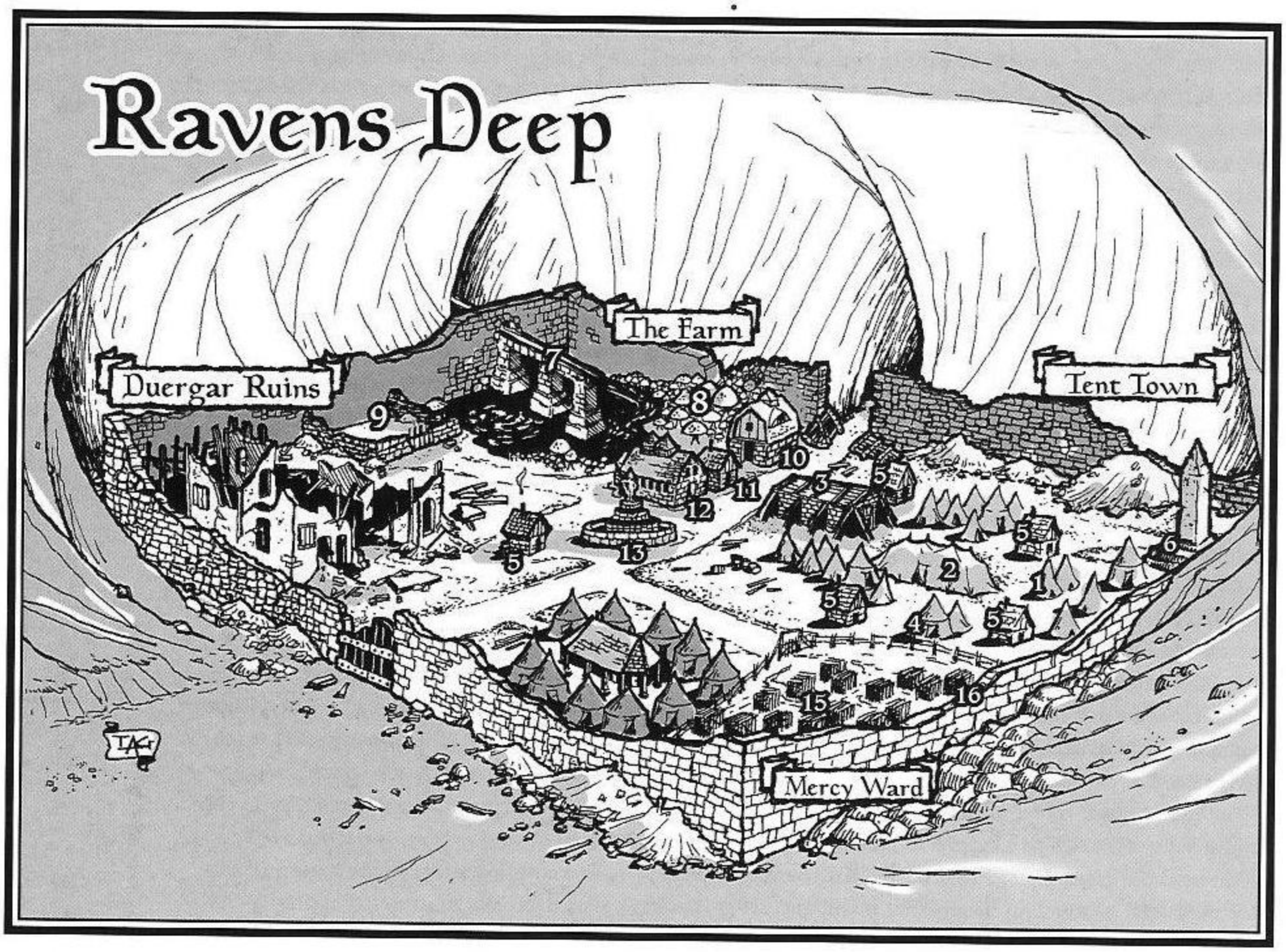
3. ARMORY

The duergar building commandeered as Ravens Deep's armory was once a storehouse for mining equipment, some of which remains in dusty corners and hanging from lonely pegs on the structure's walls. The soldiers keep a stock of mundane equipment here, as well as a good selection of drow weapons and armor. Through experimentation, it has been determined that these cannot survive the light of the sun, so many adventurers leave drow equipment below, for the use of Ravens Deep's permanent population. The armory is kept well-locked, as it is a likely target for enemies or unruly prisoners.

4. TEMPORARY HOUSING (TENTS)

Ravens Deep's 300 soldiers and 50 functionaries live in large tents fashioned from hide and burlap. Tents vary in size, the smallest for a single occupant and the largest able to accommodate as many as five individuals. All soldiers have been issued metal lockers for the storage of personal equipment.

Average Soldier of Ravens Deep: Male or female human, F6; AC 5 (chain mail armor); MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 14; #AT 1 (longsword); Dmg 1d8+2 (specialization); SZ M (5'11" tall); ML elite (14); Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10; AL NG. (The bulk of Ravens Bluff's soldiers are fighters, though a number are dual or multi-classed fighter/mages or fighter/clerics.)



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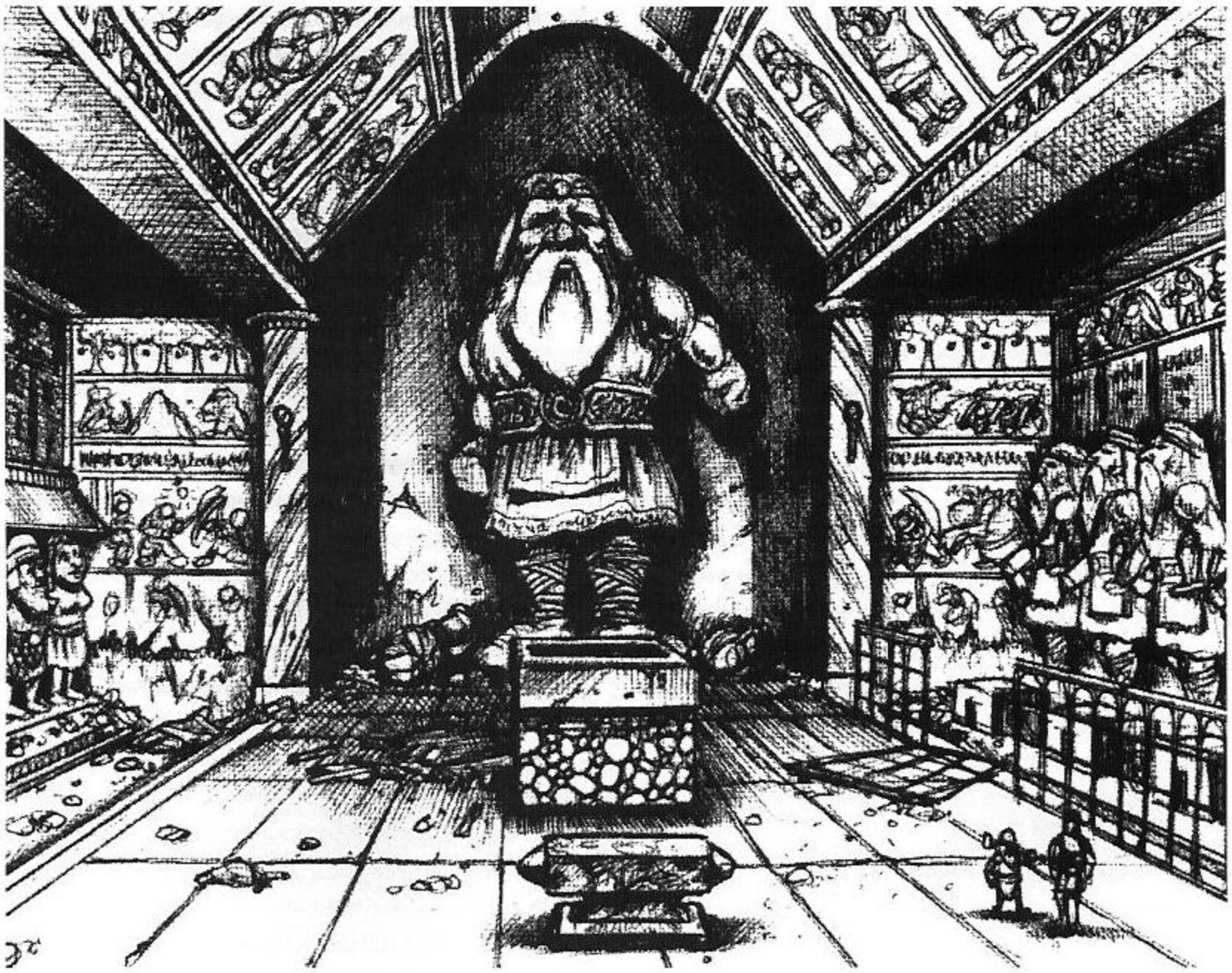

RAVEN'S DEEP LIES BELOW THE DWARVEN CITY OF SARBREEN

Adventurers and visitors from the surface also dwell within military-issue tents.

5. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

Blacktree has provided his five officers with the use of the few remaining intact duergar barracks, and though the ceilings are shorter than the humans would prefer under ideal circumstances, the buildings provide more comfort, privacy and security than the tent of the common soldier. Though the officers still sleep on the same modest pallets of gathered moss as the rest of the village inhabitants, the officers' dwellings allows them to retain a modicum of hierarchy down here. Blacktree's officers are: Dilyn Mankiller [NG 1/2ef F14 (Amazon)]; Timur Lendsar [LN hm Pr11-Red Knight (Knight of the Griffon]; Klarika Livana [LG ef F10/M10 (War Wizard, Knight of the Pillars of the Realms)]; Jonas Redmond [N dm F12 (Myrmidon)]; Dag Manzo [LG hm Pal10-Tyr (Knight of the Right Hand of Tyr)].

6. COMMON SHRINE

Far from the periphery of Tent Town, in the shadows of one of the few remaining segments of the eastern wall of the village, stands a small stone obelisk inscribed with the runes of the churches of Ravens Bluff's Clerical Circle: Chauntea, Gond, Helm, Lathander, Mystra, Selûne, Tempus, Tymora, Tyr, and Waukeen. The area has been generally sanctified by the religions that sit on the Circle, but any resident of Ravens Deep is welcome to use the shrine to worship the deity of their choosing, so long as it is not evil.

THE FARM

7. BROKEN AQUEDUCT

Water is provided by a large pool formed by a broken aqueduct in the northwest corner of the chamber. The structure is ancient and crumbling — Lord Blacktree has forbidden his soldiers from touching it, for fear that investigation might cut off their water supply.

Water flows from the aqueduct to a small depression in the corner of the village, forming a small pool known (somewhat jokingly) as Lake Amber.

8. FUNGUS BEDS

East of Lake Amber, all the way to the barn and spreading out past the broken walls, lies a vast bed of fungus. All manner of growths can be found here, from the succulent to the psychedelic to the poisonous. A wide variety of colors are present, as well, and more than one visiting druid from the surface has spent days cataloguing all of the new species of native plant life. The smallest growth is no larger than a thumb. The largest are bigger than trees.

The fungus beds (and, indeed, the entire farm region) are overseen by Holden Thornbridge [N 1/2em D10 (hivemaster)], a brooding man who prefers the company of his insect workers to that of the inhabitants of the surface. Blacktree's band encountered Thornbridge in the early weeks of their Underdark mission, and soon accepted him into their order. The druid has drow blood, and hence has spent most of his life as an outcast from both the lands above and below.

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9. ANIMAL CORRAL

The ancient duergar animal corral was found still intact, and is being used to keep a small number of animals brought down from the surface. Chickens graze amid cows and goats here, providing eggs and milk for the local populace. Keeping these animals well-fed and healthy in this alien environment is one of Blacktree's biggest challenges. A collection of small ponies was brought to Ravens Deep, but these have met with little success, as they cannot negotiate the strange tunnel formations without considerable help. They are, however, useful as beasts of burden, and have been employed to drag away broken stone and to carry supplies to workers exploring the nearby cavern system.

10. BARN

One of the few buildings in Ravens Deep that might look the same on the surface, the two-story barn has been the focus of early construction efforts in the underground community. Built on the foundations of an earlier duergar structure, the barn houses dried fungus and foodstuffs brought from the fields surrounding Ravens Bluff. Holden Thornbridge and the quartermaster make their homes in small apartments on the first floor.

11. QUARTERMASTER'S WAREHOUSE

Ravens Deep's supplies are stored and issued from the quartermaster's warehouse, a humble though sturdy structure left over from the duergar days. The building houses basic equipment, such as one might find in a general store, as well as extra uniforms, dried and preserved foods, and even some luxuries kept for special occasions, such as sweets, tobacco, and alcohol. Residents of the community are provided with basic equipment and anything they might need to perform their job. Further requests are considered personal, and must be purchased from the quartermaster using allotment tickets issued on a weekly basis.

The Quartermaster, Faisal Goldleaf [N hm Pr9-Waukeen], is an honest man who fought with Lord Blacktree in the war against Myrkyssa Jelan. Goldleaf always seems to have exactly the right supplies on hand for any request, and thus most in Ravens Deep forgive him for his penny-pinching style.

12. WAGON SHED

Ravens Deep's activities in the Underdark are aided by three carts, used for carrying goods and tools from one end of the cavern to another. Two of these wagons can be pulled by the small horses kept in the animal corral. The third is designed to be pulled by a man, a duty usually reserved as a punishment for one of the local criminals.

13. DRY FOUNTAIN

All of Ravens Deep is situated around a huge central fountain, fashioned from the floor of the cave itself. Though dry, it can be filled by clerical *create water* spells, a duty Blacktree considers in the province of visiting adventurers. The central plinth here is a chaotic mish-mash of styles, featuring an ancient rune-crafted benediction to Moradin (hinting at a dwarven origin for the village), a circle of mostly-broken crude duergar figures in various erotic poses, and a newly carved statue of a human man in chain mail armor, a monument to those who have fallen on the quest for the *Orb of Protection*.

MERCY WARD

12. HEALER'S SANCTUARY

The healer's sanctuary is a series of tents dedicated to various aspects of healing, as well as private tents for the healers, herbalists and alchemists. A central stone structure serves as an area for trauma, where surgery and bone setting takes place. A number of tents likewise have been designated for magical healing, treatment of disease and poison, and minor complaints such as foot fungi or stomach aches.

The chief cleric of the healer's sanctuary is Meda Xandra [LG hf Pal10-Illmater (medic)], an attractive young woman who appears shy and uncertain at most times, but who really blooms in a crisis. Xandra excels on exploration missions, and her cool manner has saved many lives in the field.

15. PRISONER'S COMPOUND

The old duergar slave pens have been converted to hold the prisoners brought from the surface to help with the exploration of the Underdark. The massive fence surrounding the pens still locks, though without a key it took a lot of "encouragement" from a former prisoner (now promoted to the rank of guard) to get it working. Though they remain prisoners, the pen inhabitants are provided blankets, clothing, toiletries, and any basic equipment they might need (and that might not double as a weapon). These men and women are watched carefully by Luke Truda [LN hm Pr14-Helm], a retired adventurer who ensures that they are treated fairly, and that they do not escape.

16. BRIG

One of the 10'x10' pens is kept aside as a brig in case anyone gets out if hand and discipline is required. Currently, the brig holds Barnabas Leighton [NE hm T6 (swashbuckler)]. Leighton has swashbuckler's luck (which is to say, bad) without any of the charisma or benefits usually associated with his lifestyle. In Ravens Bluff, he was little more than an opportunistic braggart who took credit for the accidental death of a member of the street gang known as the Green Knives, thus earning himself a place in the Black Talons, a rival gang. Little did he know that his initiation would be the execution of one of Blacktree's officers, a task at which he failed several weeks ago. However, he plotted his attack for more than a month, and knows the weaknesses of Ravens Deep. His hatred of Lord Blacktree, and his fear of returning to the Black Talons as a failure, are such that he could be a very powerful weapon for an Underdark force intent on doing harm to Ravens Deep. ■

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internet 101

SPELUNKING THE WEB BY ED GIBSON

We're going to explore the Underdark this month, but first we have the Favorite Gaming Web Sites winners from August's contest. The entries were narrowed down to two finalists.

The first finalist is www.rpghost.com, submitted by Aerine Caerwyn. This is a professional site, supported by advertising and an online hobby shop. The hobby shop promises 15% off retail prices, and offers a wide selection of gaming products. The Maps section provides a variety of city, dungeon, wilderness and miscellaneous maps (many suitable for use as treasure maps in your campaign). Overall, the maps are of high quality, with many appearing to be professionally rendered. The Worlds, Player, Magic and Various sections contains a number of netbooks for different D&D® Worlds (DARK SUN®, BIRTHRIGHT®, PLANESCAPE®, etc.) as well as information on topics such as cults and herbs. A netbook is a collaborative effort wherein a number of authors submit their ideas to an editor, who compiles the ideas into a coherent whole. Warning: some books are not suitable for all ages. The books are stored as zip files for faster downloading. RPG Host also provides scenarios with brief blurbs and a number of fonts suitable for fantasy gaming. Finally, the site offers free hosting for your roleplaying-related Web site. If you're interested in netbooks, you might also try Blue Troll's site, at http://www.fortunecity.com/victorian/byzantium/55/list.htm.

Our second finalist is The Kingdom of Hurva, at www.nb.net/~casper/Larry/dnd/, a complete campaign setting submitted by its creator, Larry Geyer. The Hurva site features detailed information on cities, laws, holidays, organizations and mythology, all of which can be adapted to other campaigns. The Web site for the campaign is very impressive (readers are encouraged to send in their campaign Web sites for future columns). However, the site offers more than just information and detail on Larry's personal campaign. 102 new AD&D® non-weapon proficiencies are listed and defined in PLAYER'S OPTION™: *Skills & Powers* format. A comprehensive list of NWPs is provided in the site's House Rules section, listing items from sources ranging from *The Age of Heroes* to *The Will & The Way*. The Campaign section offers tales of past adventures and information on Hurva's player characters. In addition, a variety of painted miniatures are presented for PCs, NPCs and monsters. The Reference area lists musical selections Larry uses to set the proper mood during game sessions. Finally, the site suggests some recipes which don't take a lot of time away from the gaming table. (I'm looking forward to trying the Anti-Vampire Pasta.)

Before I announce the winner, Bryan Sims is awarded Honorable Mention for suggesting The Cavemaster, at http://spitfire.ausys.se/johan/. This site can randomly generate NPCs, village maps and fantasy names.

And the winner is: Larry Geyer. Congratulations Larry, Aerine, and Bryan! RPGA® HQ will be sending you your prizes. Thanks to everyone who participated.

We'll start this month's quest for the Underdark at www.yahoo.com. I've grown accustomed to starting my searches with Yahoo when I have a definite topic in mind. In this instance, we go to Recreation and Sports, then to Outdoors, and finally to Caving. If we explore a bit, we find the Carlsbad Cavern photo gallery at http://www.nps.gov/cave/images/images.htm. The Desert Caves project, at http://www.saudicaves.com, has some spectacular photographs which are not marred by captions or other text. The Boston Grotto web site www.bostongrotto.org has some excellent photographs. The Valhalla cave picture, http://www.tiac.net/users/twortley/grotto/Valhalla.jpg looks like something out of a science fiction movie. The Butler Cave pictures, located on the web at http://www.tiac.net/users/twortley/grotto/ButlerColumns.jpg capture the malignant feel of the Underdark. The Virtual Cave, http://www.goodearthgraphics.com/virtcave.html doesn't offer a walk through a cave, but it does define and provide photographs of a number of features found in caves, so you can provide a more realistic description to your players. The Underwater Caves of El Jacinto Pat, http://www.cavedive.com, is a site dealing with underground caves in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. The site's Map Room provides a three-dimensional map of the explored portion of the cave system. A Cave Shots section provides some photos of underwater caves, and the Tulum section includes several photographs of the remains of an ancient Mayan city.

Here's some advice from The Armchair Caver, at http://www.vause.u-net.com/: "For non cavers — to simulate the caving experience, go into the garden and get changed into some old clothes. Then take your PC into the cupboard under the stairs and view these guides with the lights out. Periodically sprinkle cold water over yourself. After it's all over, smear some mud on your face..." Rough maps and photographs of several cave complexes are provided for your viewing pleasure. If you decide to try this method to add realism to the experience of crawling through the Underdark, send us an email and let us know how your players react.

That's all for this issue; if you have any questions or suggested sites for future issues, please send them to polyhedron@wizards.com. ■

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powers that be: cyndor

THE KEEPER OF INFINITY
BY LANCE HAWVERMALE

Time is, quite literally, of the essence.

As Oerth's celestial governor of time and infinity, Cyndor the Illimitable oversees the invisible clockwork of man's past, present, and future. His primary sphere of influence — that of Time — is both mysterious to contemplate and vital to the continuing cycle of life throughout the Flanaess.

Cyndor dwells in a quasi-imaginary realm known as Temporal Prime, which is rather like the Ethereal Plane in that it "touches" the Prime Material in all places at once. Better known to the sages of the Flanaess as the Demiplane of Time, this alternate dimension serves as the highway for those rare spellcasters able to traverse the conduits which connect yesterday to tomorrow. For a further explanation of Temporal Prime and complete details of its denizens and geography, consult the *Chronomancer* sourcebook (TSR 9506).

Inside the mazelike corridors of his unassailable abode, the Tempus Cidatus, Cyndor simultaneously pursues three separate and never-ending tasks. First, he devotes himself to meditating upon the imponderable aspects of time-space and how further manipulation of this continuum might alter the composition of the multiverse. On the more practical side, Cyndor is also in a state of continuous prose, as he records every act of every creature throughout every moment of its existence on Oerth. The text in which he compiles this unimaginable record is known simply as the *Perpetual Libram*. Excerpts of this sacred work have appeared on the Prime in the form of piercingly accurate histories secreted in Cyndor's austere temples. Finally, in addition to his unceasing efforts as a temporal theorist and chronicler of Oerth's ongoing history, Cyndor also directs his proxies in their work as protectors of the timestream and guardians of future and past.

Though these guardians are primarily creatures of a divine nature, a small group of mortal chronomancers (wizards who specialize in time-related spells) known as the Monitors of Infinity secretly defend Oerth's fragile timestream from interference by outside forces. Every living creature and inanimate object bears a special signature on the Demiplane of Time called a lifeline. If these lifelines were to be altered indiscriminately, the lives of thousands of people throughout Oerth would be dramatically altered. Thus the Monitors have taken it upon themselves to protect these lifelines from harm. Cyndor is the adjudicator of the elusive and faceless Monitors, aiding them in their pursuits and offering divine guidance when necessary.

Priests of Cyndor are very aware of the magnitude of their deity's charge, and as such often seem aloof, if not downright holier-than-thou. Like Cyndor himself, priests tend to speak in riddles, refusing to reveal the full secrets of their knowledge of Temporal Prime and the lifelines that abide there; they collectively scorn charlatan fortune-tellers and other mountebanks.

Cyndor's priests are hard to pin down, as their peculiar ideology is as elusive as the seconds that slip like sand from man's desperate grasp. For the most part, it is assumed that priests of Cyndor have been placed upon Oerth to act as counselors for a world that would otherwise be lost in a meaningless struggle for survival. They regularly serve as advisors to monarchs and university sages. All men seek the wisdom of augury, and all wonder what the future might hold. By consulting with a prophet of Cyndor, a person might gain insight — however vague — into the hand that time holds for him or her.

Followers of Cyndor see life not as a series of choices, but rather as a linear journey from one predetermined encounter to the next. To such thinkers as these, free choice and personal achievement are but illusions; in truth, everything that ever will be has already happened — at least for Cyndor, who has seen the beginning and the end. The invisible, temporal concept which man calls "time" is really nothing but a way for man to reckon that which he believes he is experiencing. This theory can be proven when one looks at the construction of the Demiplane of Time itself. In this plane, so-called "time" is simply a means of traveling from point A to point B. Ergo, all of man's choices are really nothing but immutable paths along a lifeline which Cyndor has already foreseen.

Services to Cyndor include the sounding of airy wind instruments and the casting of arcane spells by way of such material devices as magical mirrors, hourglasses, and looms. Cyndor is worshipped in urban places where learned men gather, such as the Free City of Greyhawk, the center of education in the Central Flanaess.

Epochs have passed since Cyndor last set foot upon the Prime Material. It is suspected that his avatar was present during the ancient Suloise-Baklunish conflict; myths surrounding the event place him as acting either with or against Lendor, the Suloise god of time. In those rare instances when he manifests himself, Cyndor appears as anything but a normal mortal man. His avatar form is that of a towering humanoid with a featureless face and odd rectangular limbs of terrible strength.

CYNDOR

The Keeper of Infinity, The Sage of Epochs, The Illimitable One
Lesser Power of Mechanus, LN
Portfolio: Time, Continuity, Infinity
Domain Name: Mechanus/Path of Time or Mount Celestia/Mertion/Rempha or Temporal Prime/Tempus Cidatus
Superior: None
Allies: Lendor (Sometimes)
Foes: Lendor (Sometimes)
Symbol: An hourglass on its side, per the symbol for infinity

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Anyone tinkering with Oerth's timestream by either magical artifact or chronomancy spell risks invoking the ire of the mysterious Monitors of Infinity or, if the infraction is serious enough, the wrath of Cyndor himself. Though the Illimitable One rarely confronts such violators personally, he has been known to direct a variety of temporal creatures for these purposes. He is served by temporal dogs and time dimensionals, among other, even more extraordinary beasts.

One known site of periodic chronomantic activity in the Flanaess can be found at the standing stones of Tovag Baragu, detailed in the Greyhawk® Adventures hardcover sourcebook (TSR 2023) and the game module Vecna Lives! (TSR 9309). Temples to Cyndor are quite rare. Somber structures of smoothed stone, the monasteries of the Illimitable One rise from the ground in seemingly illogical locales, storied places of ancient or future power. The Eternalists of Cyndor have a great interest in the doings of Blackmoor's City of the Gods, and likewise can be found in the eastern Abbor-Alz hills, scouring the ruins of ancient Itar.

In the Outer Planes, Cyndor's philosophy is readily accepted by members of the linear-thinking Fraternity of Order, while the Indeps of the Free League despise the notion of predestination, and the Dustmen find it difficult to reconcile their nihilistic beliefs with the apparently contrary evidence found in the lifelines on Temporal Prime.

When traveling, priests of Cyndor tend to wear clothing of contrasting colors, especially back and white (white capes over black robes are common, though red and gray is also a popular combination). They have been known to paint their faces with similar color schemes, and decorate their clothing with talismans, amulets, and other cryptic devices.

SPECIALTY PRIESTS (ETERNALISTS)

Requirements: Wis 15
Prime Requiste: Wisdom
Alignment: N, LN
Weapons: Boomerang, dagger, dart, hand-held crossbow, lasso, net, staff, and whip
Armor: All armor types up to and including chain mail, no shield
Major Spheres: All, Astral, Charm, Divination, Healing, Thought, Time
Minor Spheres: Creation, Guardian, Numbers, Protection
Magical Items: As clerics
Required Proficiencies: Read/Write (Common)
Bonus Proficiencies: Religion (Common), Time Sense (see below)

GRANTED POWERS

- At 2nd level, eternalists may cast delay image (see below) once per day.
- At 7th level, eternalists may attempt to slow a single opponent once per day (as per the 3rd level wizard spell, though the victim saves at -6).
- At 10th level, eternalists have become so synchronized with the movement of the timestream that they age at half the normal rate, effectively doubling their maximum age limit.
- At 15th level, eternalists become completely immune to aging-based attacks, such as the touch of a ghost.
- Priests of Cyndor have access to the special proficiency Time Sense, as well as the first-level chronomancer spell delay image. The following descriptions have been modified from their respective entries in the Chronomancer sourcebook.

Time Sense

Relevant Ability: Wisdom

A priest with the Time Sense proficiency has an internal clock, a natural sense of the passage of time which permits him to know to within 3d10 minutes the exact time of day without the aid of mechanical devices, magic, or the stars. A successful check indicates that the priest has pinpointed the time from within 3 to 30 minutes of accuracy, while failure indicates that the priest's estimation is incorrect by 1d2 hours. The priest also can use this ability to "program" himself to awaken at a predetermined hour. The proficiency check is made at a -1 penalty, with failure meaning that the priest oversleeps by one hour for every point by which the check is missed, up to maximum of four hours.

Delay Image (Chronomancy)

Level: Chronomancer 1; (Eternalist 1)
Range: Touch
Duration: 5 rounds + 1 round/level
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1Saving Throw: Neg.

By casting delay image, the priest surrounds himself or a recipient creature in a magical aura which bends time slightly in his favor. This aura of "muddled time" causes a delay in the target creature's image, improving his Armor Class by 2 and granting him a +1 bonus to all saving throws versus direct magical attacks.

The reverse of this spell, advance image, creates a false image half a second ahead of where the target currently resides in the timestream, making it easier for his opponents to strike him, as they have a brief moment to adjust their blows before the target creature "arrives" in the present second of time. The target's AC is penalized by 2, and all saving throws against direct magical attacks are made at -1.

Though this spell may be used in conjunction with other spells that affect Armor Class, its effects are not cumulative with itself. ■

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writer's guidelines

POLYHEDRON® MAGAZINE WRITER'S GUIDELINES

The RPGA® Network accepts submissions for POLYHEDRON® Magazine from all its GUILD-LEVEL® members. Articles that offer suggestions on tournament play, forming a gaming club, and improving playing or gamemastering skills are quite welcome.

We also love manuscripts dealing with general gaming topics, articles that provide support material for home campaigns, and those which offer a new way to look at some part of the game. Among these are articles dealing with our RPGA LIVING™ settings. Gaming articles could detail interesting locations or non-player characters appropriate to the chosen setting, such as a troupe of entertainers who have chosen to winter in Ravens Bluff (part of the LIVING CITY™ campaign) who are watched closely by agents of the city, or denizens of a dock bar in Seattle where Shadowrunners can pick up info and gear with no questions asked.

Make sure that the submission is based upon the most recent edition of the game in question. As of issue 144 (Deadline: July 3), all DUNGEONS & DRAGONS articles must be compatible with the forthcoming Third Edition rules.

STEP 1: QUERY LETTER

The road to publication begins with a query letter, in which you give us an idea of what your article will contain. Include in this letter the approximate length of the article and a short, detailed description of exactly what you will cover. It would also help if you give us an idea of when the finished article could be ready. Sending a query letter saves you time and allows us to help you tailor your article to meet the needs of our readers and the themes of upcoming issues.

The best way to query an article idea is to send a quick email to the editor at (polyhedron@wizards.com). The query should include your address, telephone number, and Network membership number. You do not need a separate letter for each submission idea; you may include multiple ideas in a single letter as long as you describe the length and content of each proposed article.

If you must send a query by post, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) so that we can reply.

We will not accept manuscripts that have not been preceded by a query letter; they will be returned unread if you have enclosed a SASE. If you do not enclose a SASE, we have no choice but to throw the manuscript away.

STEP 2: SUBMISSION

If we like your idea, we will ask you to send us the completed article. You must send a hard copy (neatly typed, double-spaced, on white letter-quality paper) and an electronic copy (on 3 1/2 inch disk). We prefer that the electronic copy be in Microsoft Word or RTF (rich text format). It is a good idea to include an ASCII file as a backup. Each of the following requirements are important parts of the submission process. Please follow them.

- A Standard Disclosure Form must accompany each submission. You should also send a cover letter highlighting any special features or other considerations within the submission.
- Your name, address, home telephone number, and Network membership number must appear on the upper right corner of the first page of the submission. Your name and the page number must be on each subsequent page.
- Indicate on the outside of the envelope in which you send the manuscript that you have enclosed a Polyhedron submission.
- Each submission must include a SASE for the editor's reply. If your article is more than a few pages long and you want it back, send a larger envelope with sufficient postage to cover the return mailing. Persons outside the United States should send International Reply Coupons (do not send cash or foreign stamps for return postage). Submissions without sufficient return postage will not be returned. Make sure you keep a copy of the manuscript for your records. The Network cannot be held responsible for lost manuscripts. Mail all correspondence to:

RPGA Network
Attn: Polyhedron Magazine
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707

PRESENTATION AND STYLE

Any article submitted to us must be written in as professional a manner as possible. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors detract from our ability to give your submission a fair reading, as do syntax and organization problems. We strongly urge that you edit your manuscript

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thoroughly. You should show it to someone with strong editorial skills; another person's viewpoint may improve your article. Often we do not have time to properly edit manuscripts with numerous errors or which seem confusing. This can result in an otherwise acceptable article going unpublished.

Make sure that your article is complete. It must have all relevant game statistics, maps, and any other necessary support documentation. Place any tables, charts, or maps at the end of your article. Any maps you include must be clear, legible, and drawn in ink or computer generated. This makes it easier for our mapping artists to recreate your map. It is not necessary to provide artwork; our artists will take care of this.

Please do not try to make the manuscript look fancy by using "artistic" fonts; these are more difficult to read. We are interested in what you have written and how it is constructed; a simple font will do.

Because the Magazine is only 32 pages, we cannot publish long articles. We encourage you to submit articles of approximately 750-3000 words. The maximum length is 4,500 words except when a larger article is pre-approved by the editor. We usually have around 750 words per page, which puts the maximum article length at around six pages. An 8 1/2" by 11" double-spaced page averages 250 words, so manuscripts should be no longer than 18 pages.

A note regarding Letters to the Editor and other similar submissions: The guidelines outlined above are primarily for writers interested in submitting articles to the magazine. If you are submitting a Letter to the Editor, you do not have to follow these guidelines. You should, however, make sure that submissions are as clear and legible as possible. If we can't read your letter, we can't adequately respond to it.

UPCOMING ISSUE THEMES

Each issue of Polyhedron is structured around a theme (this issue's theme is *the Underdark*). While not all articles in a given issue relate to the theme, those that do are more likely to find their way from the submission pile to the magazine.

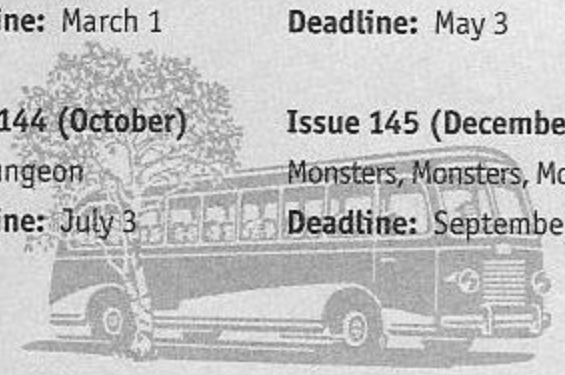
UPCOMING POLYHEDRON THEMES INCLUDE:

Issue 142 (June)
Horror & Conspiracies
Deadline: March 1

Issue 143 (August)
Wilderness
Deadline: May 3

Issue 144 (October)
The Dungeon
Deadline: July 3

Issue 145 (December)
Monsters, Monsters, Monsters
Deadline: September 4



STEP 3: PAYMENT!

Yes, it's true, we actually pay for the right to publish your article. Our rates run about $.04 a word, a competitive rate. This is a flat fee; we do not pay royalties. If more than one person collaborated on an article, we need a signed statement from all authors concerning the division of payment. Authors from the United States must provide us with their Social Security Numbers for tax purposes.

If your article is accepted, we will send you three copies of a contract for your work, which you must sign and return to us. Within sixty days of the publication of your article, we will pay you the amount agreed in the contract, and will enclose a copy of the contract signed by us, so you will have a copy for your records. If you are under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign the contract.

Once you sign the contract, Wizards of the Coast, Inc., owns all publication rights to the article. (There are exceptions, particularly cases in which the article is about a game system not owned by Wizards of the Coast.) This means that you cannot resell the article to another publication, even in revised form, without our written permission.

The work must be your own. If you use material from other sources, you must accurately identify your sources. Make sure that quotes match exactly with your source. Be careful not to plagiarize (do not take someone else's writings and attempt to present them as your own). Authors bear full legal responsibility for their writing. ■

The Polyhedron Method
of Magazine Production

With Quality and Pride at every step. That's the Polyhedron Way.

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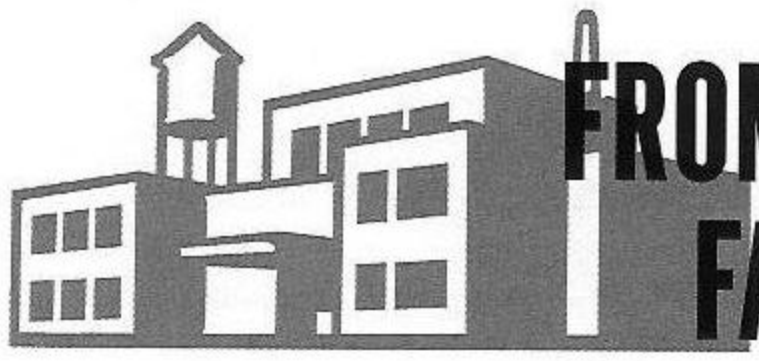
reader survey

WE'RE HERE TO HEAR

Please rank each article or section of the magazine from 1-5 with 1 being "Man, did a monkey fling crap in here, or what!" and 5 being "Monkey, will you be mine?" (In case you were wondering, 1 is bad, and 5 is good. Thank you.) Please include any other comments you feel are appropriate. All responses received on or before April 1, 1900 will be entered for a drawing to win a free copy of *Slavers*. Woo-hoo!

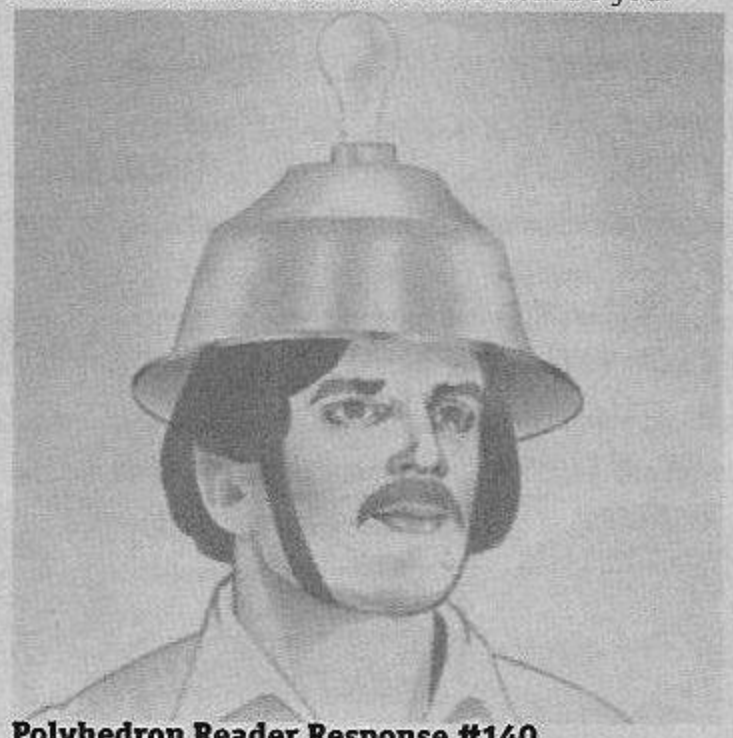
RPGA # _____ Name _____

	RATING				
ARTICLE	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Erik's Editorial	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Notes From HQ	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Table Talk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Member Spotlight	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Living City Judge Guidelines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Elminster's Everwinking Eye	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
City of Ooze	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Underdark Campaign Journal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internet 101	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Powers That Be: Cyndor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Polyhedron Writer's Guidelines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



FROM THE POLYHEDRON FACTORY, TO YOU!

Even Jethro has an idea for POLYHEDRON. Do you?



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FAX: 425-226-3182
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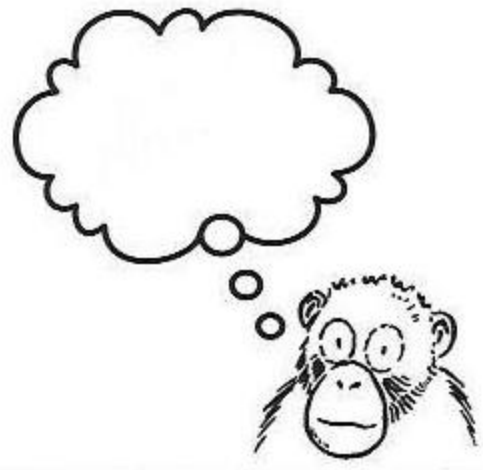
COMMENTS



WHAT IS CLETUS THINKING?